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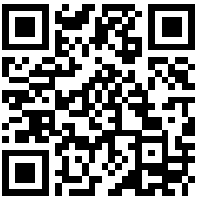

THE MYTHOLOGY OF ALL RACES

IN THIRTEEN VOLUMES

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CHINESE

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CHINESE MYTHOLOGY

BY

JOHN C. FERGUSON

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS volume should be called "Outlines of Chinese Mythology." It lays no claim to consideration as being an exhaustive study of Chinese mythology, which would require many volumes. It has been possible to condense the essential facts into this small space by an exclusion of all myths which have any suspicion of a foreign origin and by avoiding all comparisons between those of China and those of other countries. Only such traditional stories have been examined as are concerned with the powers of nature, the origin of created things, or the growth of governmental institutions and popular customs among the Chinese people.

When the earliest written records of China were made, established government and an orderly life among the people already existed. There must have been also a vast store of oral traditions. The task of those who were able to transmit their opinions by means of writing was to explain established government and organized life in the light of oral tradition. Out of this attempt grew all the myths which centre around the early rulers, celestial and terrestrial. Although the form of these myths may have suffered many changes as they were being transcribed to writing, their content has, without doubt, been accurately preserved; it is with written traditions that this study is concerned.

The sources are numerous and are too well-known to those who are versed in Chinese literature to need mentioning, while a detailed list would be of no help to the general reader. The index will serve as a guide to those who wish to go further into Chinese literary sources, as well as an aid to those to whom the system of transliteration of Chinese sounds may be unfamiliar.

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On the part of the author the approach to the subject has been made with full recognition that pitfalls for the unwary were waiting at every turn. The extent of Chinese literature, the niceties of verbal distinction, the various versions of stories which have gradually developed into fixed accounts, the free use of imaginative details by authors who agree only concerning central facts, these and many other similar conditions make the path of one working in this field slippery and dangerous. The hope of the author is that the aid of scholarly Chinese friends has helped him to avoid many mistakes and has enabled him to give a presentation of the outlines of a vast subject which no one up to the present writing has ventured to treat.

JOHN C. FERGUSON

January, 1927

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INTRODUCTION

THE origin of the tribes which first settled along the valley of the Yellow River and expanded into the Chinese race, is still a subject for future investigators. Wherever these early settlers came from, they possessed strong physiques and must have been fond of adventure, for we find them scattered along the Yangtze River in the neighbourhood of the present city of Hankow and far east of the hills of Chehkiang, as well as having pushed their way to the country north and south of the mouth of the Yellow River. The courses of the great rivers of China being eastward, it is reasonable to suppose that the drift of the mainland population of China has been from west to east.

The coast provinces of China, Kuangtung, Fukien, and the southern half of Chehkiang, give evidences of having been populated in the first instance by seafaring people, probably of Malay origin. They were allied to the early populations of the Philippine Islands and Japan, spoke many dialects, and persisted for a long time in their inherent tendency to split up into small divisions. The mainland civilization of China gradually spread south-eastward among these illiterate people, and from the time of the T'ang dynasty in the seventh century A.D., absorbed them not only into the political domain, but also infused into them its dominating spirit. China furnished these tribes with literature, art and government institutions so completely that in a few generations nearly all traces of their exotic origin had been obliterated, the only persisting reminder being in the name " Men of T'ang " by which the people of Canton still call themselves, thus remembering that they came into the

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realm of Chinese civilization in the T'ang dynasty, and that this event was the beginning of their ordered life under established government.

There was no attempt among the early annalists of China to trace their national origin to a divine or supernatural source. The nearest approach to such extravagance is in the account of the birth of the legendary founder of the Chow dynasty. Hou-chi, to whom sacrifices were offered by the House of Chow, was the son of Chiang Yüan. His mother, who had been childless for some time, trod on a toe-print made by God, was moved thereby to become pregnant, and later gave birth to Hou-chi. This wonderful son was reared with the aid of sheep and oxen who protected him with loving care. Birds screened and supported him with their wings. He was able to feed himself at an early age by planting beans and wheat. It was he who gave to his people the beautiful grains of the millet which was reaped in abundance and stacked up on the ground for the support of his dependent people. This tale has been recognized in historical times as a fable, and treated with good-natured tolerance, though not with belief. There has been a surprising lack of interest among Chinese writers concerning this subject of the origin of their race, and it will be noted in this account of Hou-chi that nothing is said about the origin of his mother. The keen common sense of the Chinese race, which has been one of their most prominent characteristics

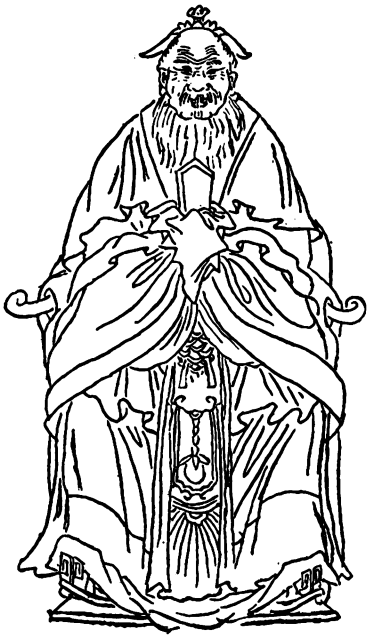

FIG. 1. HOU-CHI

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in all ages, has kept them from the folly of ascribing a divine origin to their particular race.

The historian Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien commences his Annals with Huang Ti, the first of the Five Sovereigns, 2704–2595 B.C. Some other writers go back to the earlier period of the mythical Three Emperors, but the period in which events may be regarded as having historical foundations is much later even than the time of Huang Ti. With the information which is at present available to the world, it is not safe to place the commencement of the historical period of China earlier than the fall of the Shang dynasty, and the rise of the House of Chow, 1122 B.C. It is better still to place the beginning of reliable history as 841 B.C., which is the first exact date with which Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien starts in the *Shih Chi*. At this period we are met with a civilization already well established. The people not only were good agriculturists, but also understood the art of writing. Such remains as we have of an earlier time are ideographs incised on bones or cast as inscriptions on bronze sacrificial vessels. The amount of historical knowledge gained from these is very small and has made little contribution to our understanding of the early civilization of China. Their chief value has been in furnishing evidence that the civilization of China as we know it in the Chow dynasty, is a continuous development from the early civilization of the original inhabitants of China, and that it is not an importation from outside sources. China developed for herself a civilization distinct from that of any other nation of antiquity, and this civilization with many changes and wide development has remained down to our present time. It has had a longer continuous existence than any other that the world has ever known.

The practice of divination and the observance of ceremonies, family and tribal, are the two outstanding features of the ancient civilization of China. They represent the contrasting ideals of individualistic and of social development. The conception of

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the individual, governed by his own innate sense of right and wrong, as forming the basis of the state, is associated with the practices of divination by means of which the immediate actions of the individual should be determined and the results of his actions foretold. The conception of the state, personified by its tutelary head, as determining right or wrong for the individual, is associated with ceremonial observances. The former system, being individualistic, is liberal, while the latter is conservative. The former provides for change amidst changing circumstances; the latter contemplates rigidity based upon existing tradition.

It has been customary among Chinese writers to divide the philosophic concepts of the nation into nine schools. These are: (1) The School of Dualism, (2) The School of Letters, (3) The School of Equality, (4) The School of Words, (5) The School of Laws, (6) The School of Doctrine, (7) The School of Agriculturists, (8) The School of Tolerance, and (9) The Eclectic School. There is no need of following the intricate philosophic distinctions of these nine schools in this present discussion; it is sufficient to note that they can be classified under the two general headings of Liberalism, as exemplified by Lao Tzŭ, Tao Chia, and of Conservatism, as typified by Confucius, Ju Chia. The development and tendencies of these two schools circumscribe the entire body of Chinese thought, both ancient and modern.

The line of demarcation between these two schools may be illustrated by the adherence of the one to the Eight Diagrams reputed to have been evolved by Fu Hsi from marks found on the back of a dragon horse; and of the other to the ceremonial Nine Tripods recognized by Confucius as the emblem of Imperial authority. The Liberal School found ancient authorization in "The Book of Changes," the Conservative in "The Spring and Autumn Annals." The former was free to range over the whole field of animal and plant life in search of an explanation of man's relation to the universe; the latter confined itself to

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human activities as found in social organizations. These are only general distinctions and cannot be pressed too far, but are sufficient to indicate the diverging tendencies of thought in China from earliest time.

It is convenient to start with Confucius and Lao Tzŭ of the sixth century B.C., as the point from which two distinct systems take their origin, although these men are only exponents of systems which had already become settled. Tao, nature, with its constant changes, became the centre of Liberalism in opposition to the Confucian theory of absolutism represented by the Emperor. The Liberal School believed in bringing the head of the state to the same account for his personal actions as the humblest person; whereas under the Conservative system of Confucius, the Emperor is restricted by no law. Even though it is conceded that moral considerations should determine his conduct, no legal pressure could be brought to bear upon him as upon an ordinary man. The standard commentator of the Liberal School, Pan Ku, makes I Yin, who is said to have lived in the eighteenth century B.C., the first exponent of the principles of Tao. It was I Yin who advised T'ang to plot rebellion against the existing Hsia dynasty, and remained with him as adviser when he established the new dynasty of Shang. The next two exponents of the Tao are given by this commentator as T'ai Kung and Yü Hsiung, who were attached to Wên Wang at the time when he was planning a revolt against the cruel rule of the last years of the Shang dynasty. The next exponent of Tao, according to Pan Ku, was Kuan I-wu, Chief Minister of the state of Ch'i, and the first to make a feudal state assume hegemony among the other states while acknowledging the nominal authority of the ruling Chow dynasty. These authoritative examples of the early Tao teaching show it to have been in marked contrast with the Conservatism of the School of Letters which looked with tolerance upon the action of rulers simply for the reason that they were rulers.

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The greatest political support of Liberalism was the Emperor Shih Huang, the founder of the Ch'in dynasty. His Prime Minister, Li Ssŭ, was the most untiring opponent of the Conservative School of his time or of any subsequent time. Both the Emperor and his Prime Minister were firm believers in the principles of the School of Doctrine or Tao. In personal conduct as well as in the establishment and administration of his government, Shih Huang reflected no honour upon the teachings of the School of Lao Tzŭ. He was a cruel tyrant, passionate in temper, intolerant of any form of opposition and entirely dominated by his own imperious self-will. He burned the books of the Conservatives and destroyed their ceremonial utensils in the hope of cutting himself off from the restrictions imposed by those who had gone before him, and of establishing a new order. His success was only partial, for though he established a bureaucratic form of government which continued in its general principles down to the Republican Revolution of 1911–12, it was controlled after his death not by the principles in which he believed, but by those of the Conservative School. The task of the Han dynasty, which succeeded the Ch'in established by Shih Huang, consisted in retaining the form of government established by Shih Huang and of bringing it under the domination of the philosophical ideas of the Conservative School. If Shih Huang had been a man of a higher type of personal character, the dynasty which he established might have had a good chance of survival. As it happened, his government survived in form, but came entirely under the control of an opposing set of principles.

During the Han dynasty, about 150 B.C., the sayings of Confucius were compiled by one of his descendants, K'ung An-kuo. This compilation, called *Lun Yü Hsün Tz'ŭ*, was based upon the comparison of two texts. One of these was found with other texts, *pi chung shu*, in a wall of the home of Confucius when it was being demolished by Kung Wang, son

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of the Emperor Ching Ti, who was appointed by his father to be King of the Principality of Lu (modern Shantung). This text was written in the so-called " tadpole " characters, *k'o-tou wên*, and is known as the " ancient text," *ku wên*. The other text came from the neighbouring principality of Ch'i and, being written in the characters which were used in the last years of the Chow dynasty, is known as the " modern text," *chin wên*. The compilation of K'ung An-kuo, with some emendations, has remained the standard of the Conservative School for all succeeding generations, and as it includes the *Ch'un Ch'iu*, or " Spring and Autumn Annals," it carries back the account of China's ancient civilization to a great antiquity.

It is thus evident that there have been from ancient times two lines of development in Chinese thought, one conservative and the other liberal. These have not been mutually exclusive, but have flourished side by side and not infrequently have been found together in the writings of one person. From the western point of view there is a lack of precision in the differences between these two schools, but to the Chinese the contrast lies in their general ideas rather than in details.

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CHINESE MYTHOLOGY

CHAPTER I

TAOISM

THE School of Doctrine, Tao, has gathered around it almost all the mythological characters of Chinese history; and it is necessary to understand the gradual development of this school into one of the national Three Religions — Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The emphasis placed upon mythological subjects having taken place after the establishment of Taoism as a religion, and the object of this book being to discuss these subjects and not ethical ones, it will not be necessary in the following pages to make any further use of the term School of Doctrine, Tao. In its stead the term Taoism will be used in a generic sense as including all that went before as well as all that followed after its recognition as a religion.

There are three distinct stages of Taoism. The first of these, which may be called the ethical, can be dated conveniently as having begun with Lao Tzŭ and his writings which are included in the *Tao Teh King*. This was the stage of philosophic discussion, beginning about the close of the sixth century B.C. The second stage or the magical, as it may be called, began in the first century of the Christian era and is centred around the personality of Chang Tao-ling. He retired to seclusion in the mountains of western China and devoted himself to the study of alchemy and to the cultivation of purity by means of mental abstraction. Here he was sought out by large numbers of disciples, who paid him five pecks of rice a day for their keep, from

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which his teaching became known as the Wu Tou Mi Tao or the "Doctrine of Five Pecks of Rice." This congregation of Chang's disciples was the first stirring of the movement which later was organized into a religion. Chang called himself "Celestial Teacher" (*t'ien shih*). This was a term used by Chuang Tzŭ, who states that it was conferred upon a youth of Hsiang Ch'êng by the Yellow Emperor. According to the *Su Wên* it was also given to Ch'i Po, one of the assistants of the Yellow Emperor, who is known as the founder of the art of healing. This was the stage of development of the magical arts and was based upon the mysteries of "The Book of Changes" rather than upon the ethical teachings of Lao Tzŭ. The third stage, or that of an organized religion, came in the seventh century A.D. during the reign of the illustrious founder of the T'ang dynasty, Li Shih-min, whose dynastic title is T'ai Tsung. Profoundly influenced by the tradition that the family name of Lao Tzŭ was Li, and that this was his own patronymic, T'ai Tsung lent his influence to the establishment of Taoism as a religion on the same basis as the flourishing Buddhistic religion in whose mysteries he was also a profound believer. According to *Fên Yen Chien Wên Chi*, T'ai Tsung claimed Lao Tzŭ as the progenitor of his branch of the Li family.

As a religion Taoism was founded in the seventh century A.D., and in its religious aspects is an imitation of Buddhism. It adopted the Buddhistic custom of building temples in which groups of ascetics were collected for the purpose of performing religious rites and of propagating doctrine. Early Chinese history was searched for personages who could be matched with those from India introduced into China by Buddhism. Lao Tzŭ took the place of Śākyamuni; the Four Heavenly Kings (Ssŭ T'ien Wang) that of the Four Lokopolas; the Three Pure Ones (San Ch'ing) that of the Three Precious Ones (San Pao), etc. There was little attempt on the part of this new Taoist religion to refute any of the doctrines of Indian Buddhism, although a

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FIG. 2. MEETING OF CONFUCIUS AND LAO TZŬ

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close analysis of the doctrines of these two sects would show that they are not in harmony on fundamental questions. Buddhism aims at exterminating both soul and body, while Taoism strives to etherealize the body until it reaches a state of immortality. The radical difference in doctrinal teachings was glossed over in the zeal of the T'ang Emperor to transpose the popular belief in Buddhism into nationalistic lines. Everything in Taoism is of purely Chinese origin, and however much its form may have been influenced by the importation of Buddhism, the entire body of the Taoist doctrine springs from national sources. Taoism is a revolt against Buddhism because of its foreign origin, while at the same time it did not hesitate to copy slavishly its whole system of organization.

The influence of the ethical philosophy of Lao Tzŭ in the organized development of Taoism was largely overshadowed by the magical arts of Chang Tao-ling, who reverted to an earlier source than Lao Tzŭ for his authority. He went back to "The Book of Changes" (*I King*), of which Confucius said in the "Analects" (*Lun Yü*): "If my number of years were increased, I would give fifty of them to the study of the *I King* and then I might come to be without great faults." "The Book of Changes" is the earliest of the Chinese classics, and, it may be added, remains the one least understood. It must have originated several centuries earlier than the time of Confucius and Lao Tzŭ, but after the time of Wên Wang, 1231–1135 B.C., who expanded the original Eight Diagrams into sixty-four, such as are found in this classic. The *I King* is concerned with the discussion of lucky and unlucky events which are mysteriously entwined with the names of the Sixty-four Diagrams. It speaks of good fortune in such events as choosing a wife, in returning home, in going on an expedition. It couples morality with good fortune in such phrases as "there is prosperity for the hero who is correct in conduct." It gives great honour to the ruler of the state, and this is probably the reason that Confucius so

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strongly approved of its teachings, and was content to pass over its magic. It is the text of the official phrases used by diviners, who, it must be remembered, were high officials in the early governments of China. The rare passages in this classic which refer to a philosophic conception of government are submerged by the constant allusions to good and ill luck and to divination.

There are also three other early books which are filled with accounts of extraordinary happenings. The *Shan Hai King* ("Mountain and Sea Classic") would appear from its name to have been devoted to geography, as the *Shui King* ("Water Classic") might have been expected to treat of water-ways. In reality both these treatises, which are considered classical, contain accounts of all sorts of strange things in the animal and aquatic worlds. In its present form the *Shan Hai King* was not compiled until after the beginning of the Christian era, but the tales contained therein are popular legends which had their origin as far back at least as the Chow dynasty. The "Critical Catalogue" of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung's library, or *Ssŭ K'u Ch'üan Shu*, denies that the tenets of this classic are those of Lao Tzŭ, but Taoist authors have usually claimed it as belonging to their sect. The third classic is the *Yin Fu King* ("Mysterious Tally"), the authorship of which has been credited in Taoist circles to the mythical Emperor, Huang Ti. This book is largely devoted to ethical discussions in which an attempt is made to fit the one side of the tally which covers the visible phenomena around us with the other half which relates to the unseen world. It discusses the hidden harmony which exists in all animate things where only discord appears on the surface, and reconciles the apparent disagreements between the seen and the unseen. Special mention is made of this classic in order to point out the fact that in addition to Lao Tzŭ there were other accredited Taoists who gave their attention to ethics at the same time as there was a constant succession of those who devoted themselves to magical and miraculous arts.

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The *Tao Teh King* was given this name by Hsüan Tsung, seventh Emperor of the T'ang dynasty, during the early part of the eighth century A.D., but its contents are rightly reputed to be mainly the sayings of Lao Tzŭ. Direct quotations from it, as well as paraphrases of its leading truths, are given by several philosophers earlier than the Christian era, the one nearest to the time of Lao Tzŭ having lived little more than one hundred years subsequent to him. There seems little reason to doubt the historical tradition that such a person as Lao Tzŭ existed, and that the record of his sayings is found in the *Tao Teh King*, even though we allow that this book may also contain interpolations and additions made by later writers. The doctrines of Lao Tzŭ are stated in crisp sentences, the meaning of which has caused endless speculation among Chinese commentators and foreign students. The first chapter discusses the word "Tao" which subsequently gave its name to the Taoist religion. Tao is at the beginning of all things, existing before the creation of the world. When it takes a form it is called Ming, "a name." The proper relation of a philosopher to the universe is non-action, *wu wei*, and quietness, *ching*. In general terms this classic shows how Tao is the true teacher of man, instructing him in humility, self-control, quietness, consideration for others and meekness. By following its principles, man can achieve, without striving or seeming to do so. There are a few traces of supernatural and mysterious influences which were easily diverted by later Taoist teachers to the support of their magical practices and mysterious investigations; but taken as a whole the classic maintains a high level in moral discussions. It has only a forced relationship to the Taoist religion of the T'ang dynasty, which may be justly compared to the forced relationship which Li Shih-min, T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty, claimed with Li Erh, Lao Tzŭ, whose sayings are found in the *Tao Teh King*.

The references to the teachings of Lao Tzŭ made by the phi-

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losophers Chuang and Lieh, as well as their own disquisitions, are chiefly devoted to ethics. The nature of their discussions might naturally have been considered sufficient to protect the teachings of Lao Tzŭ from seizure by Chang Tao-ling of the Han dynasty and the Emperor T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty, as a basis upon which a structure of magic could be built and a religion established. The only reasonable explanation of their having been unable to do so is, that since it was impossible to harmonize the magical arts of Chang with the teachings of the Conservative School represented by Confucius, the only possible resort of the Emperor T'ai Tsung in founding a nationalistic religion was to Lao Tzŭ whose teachings had been expressed in such ambiguous terms that they admitted of many differing interpretations. The Conservatives stood for the existing order, whereas a new religion demanded changes. T'ai Tsung gave all due respect to the Conservative class which rallied to his support as Emperor and appreciated his patronage of orthodox literature and art. At the same time his profound belief in the religious teachings of Buddhism impelled him to borrow therefrom all the essential principles which should be worked over into a new nationalistic religion for China, based upon Liberalism, while at the same time it ran no risk of conflicting with Confucian Conservatism for the reason that both had a common origin in the ancient civilization of China.

From the foregoing it will be seen that Taoism, as developed into a national religion in the T'ang dynasty, had a very mixed origin. By adopting Lao Tzŭ as the philosophic founder of this religion, Taoism selected the ancient sayings found in the *Tao Teh King* as capable of interpretation in support of magical arts and alchemy, and as containing nothing which could be used against the incorporation of these grosser elements into the new religion. The amplifications of the teaching of Lao Tzŭ by Chuang Tzŭ, Lieh Tzŭ, Han Fei Tzŭ and Huai-nan Tzŭ, which are accepted as standard interpretations of his teach-

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ing, contain proportionately many more references to mysterious events and supernatural abilities than the original sayings of the *Tao Teh King*, while at the same time they carry the views of Lao Tzŭ concerning immortality well along the road toward the magical practices, mystical charms and alchemic studies of Chang Tao-ling. From the time of Chang to that of T'ai Tsung at the opening of the Han dynasty, the influence of the Conservative School and the Confucian classics was at a low ebb, due in large measure to the rising popularity of Buddhistic teaching which came in upon China like a flood during this period. The whole trend of thought during those six hundred odd years, was in the direction of belief in miraculous events, worship of idols, and admiration of an ascetic life as most conducive to religious purification. With this state of mind, which had lasted for so long a time, T'ai Tsung found a soil well-prepared for the new religion of Taoism in which asceticism was favoured and magical arts were practised under the sanction of the ethical teachings of Lao Tzŭ. To asceticism and magic the Conservative Confucian school was unalterably opposed, but the mixture of Lao Tzŭ's ethical teaching in Taoism and its backward look to the early historical and mythical characters of China, saved Taoism from any persecution by the Conservative class, not only at the time of its origin, but also during all later centuries. Buddhism was persecuted because it was foreign; Taoism, which contained more superstition than its foreign rival, was looked upon with favour because its whole atmosphere was nationalistic.

This strong nationalistic strain in Taoism led its supporters to claim the early Emperor, Huang Ti, as the real founder of this new religion, thus going far back beyond Lao Tzŭ in point of time and prestige. The principles advocated by Confucius were attributed by him to Yao and Shun, of the twenty-fourth and twenty-third centuries B.C., but Taoism went back three centuries earlier to the first of the five sovereigns, who is reputed

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to have ruled at the dawn of history. Huang Ti, usually known as the Yellow Emperor, formed a much more convenient starting point for the kind of religion that Taoism gave promise of becoming, than the ethical philosopher, Lao Tzŭ, for Huang Ti had not only had a miraculous birth, but his reign had been filled with marvellous events. He gathered around him six great Ministers with whose help he arranged the cyclical period of sixty years and composed a calendar. Mathematical calculations were inaugurated. The people were taught to make utensils of wood, metal and earth, to build boats and carriages, to use money, to make musical instruments out of bamboo which he first brought to China, and to do many other wonderful things. He sacrificed to Shang Ti, the Supreme Ruler, in the first temple erected for this purpose, and is thus the reputed founder of the sacrificial cult. He is also given credit for having built the first palace so as to distinguish his residence from those of the common people. He studied the operations of the opposing principles of nature, and the properties of various herbs which he made into medicines, by the use of which human life could be greatly prolonged. Before his death, at the age of one hundred and eleven, the phoenix (*fêng-huang*), and the unicorn (*ch'i-lin*), had appeared as evidences of the benignity of his rule. These traditions concerning the Yellow Emperor had become well established in China long before the decision of T'ai Tsung to make Taoism a religion, and what more natural than that the Yellow Emperor, who had become the starting point of all miraculous and wonderful national events, should become the actual fountain from which it could be claimed that Taoism flowed. If it had not been for the influence of the Conservative School which emphasized ethical teaching, there is not much likelihood that any large emphasis would ever have been placed in Taoism upon its connection with Lao Tzŭ, for as a matter of fact, Taoism as a religion has very slight connection with any kind of ethical teaching. Its real emphasis is upon

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magical and occult practices, and its development in China from the T'ang dynasty onward would not have been much different from what it has been if no relation with Lao Tzŭ had been established. The true source of Taoism is rightly placed in the mythical and magical Yellow Emperor and the ascetic Chang Tao-ling rather than in the ethical recluse, Lao Tzŭ. With the Yellow Emperor was associated Kuang Ch'êng-tzŭ who has become a famous character. He dwelt as a recluse in a stone house on the K'ung-t'ung Mountain. According to Chuang Tzŭ the Yellow Emperor at one time went to this mountain to inquire of Kuang Ch'êng-tzŭ concerning philosophical matters. Kuang Ch'êng-tzŭ is popularly represented as standing with his face upturned, with his arms folded in such a way as to gather up his long sleeves, and with a large medallion suspended from his belt. On the medallion are inscribed the Eight Diagrams. His celestial abode is in the Capital of Silence (Yü Hsü Kung). He is credited with the power of controlling evil spirits and giving victory in war.

Fig. 3. Kuang Ch'êng-tzŭ

It was during the Yüan dynasty that the position of Lao Tzŭ became fixed in Taoism. He had been canonized by T'ai Tsung with the title of Hsüan Yüan Huang Ti, which means "Emperor of Mysterious Origin." The Yüan dynasty seized upon the first two characters of this canonical name, and connected

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PLATE II

CENTRAL HALL, PO YÜN KUAN, TAOIST TEMPLE, PEKING

See pp. 23, 135.

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them in reverence with its own name, Yüan, in the same way as T'ai Tsung had connected himself with Lao Tzŭ on account of having a common surname. This forced connection in two instances between reigning houses and Lao Tzŭ — the T'ang through identity of surname and the Yüan through similarity between its dynastic name and the canonical name bestowed upon Lao Tzŭ — had profound influence upon the success of Taoism as a religion among the people. During the time of the first Yüan Emperor, Genghis Khan, a noted recluse, Ch'iu Ch'u-chi (Ch'iu Ch'ang Ch'un), was sought out in his retreat on the Snowy Mountain (Hsüeh Shan), and from him the Emperor learned of the doctrines of Taoism. It is in honour of this man that on the nineteenth day of the first moon it is customary for residents of Peking to make pilgrimages to the Po Yün Kuan, a famous Taoist temple outside the Hsi Pien Mên. The popular name for this pilgrimage is Yen Chiu. This temple was the Ch'ang Ch'un palace during the Yüan dynasty and was presented by the Emperor Genghis Khan to Ch'iu Ch'u-chi. Tradition has it that Genghis Khan wished to betroth his daughter to Ch'iu, and that Ch'iu, fearing possible consequences of such a marriage, decided on the nineteenth day of the first moon to avoid any marriage by becoming an ascetic. It is in honour of Ch'iu's decision that this yearly pilgrimage is made. This popular account must, however, be set aside in view of the fact that the day celebrated was in reality the birthday of Ch'iu Ch'u-chi. During the reign of the Yüan Emperor, T'ien Li, 1329–1332 A.D., the great statesman and scholar, Chao Mêng-fu, wrote the inscription for an immense stone tablet bestowed by this Emperor upon the Tung Yo temple outside the Ch'ao Yang Mên which had been built under the Imperial patronage of one of his predecessors. This tablet remains in a good state of preservation in this large temple, and its inscription is one of the most interesting as well as authoritative expositions of Taoism available to students. In this inscription Taoism is

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referred to as Hsüan Chiao instead of Tao Chiao, which was the popular name. The term Hsüan Chiao never came into popular use, but by its adoption the Yüan dynasty Emperors went one step further in the glorification of Lao Tzŭ by adding their approval to the canonization bestowed upon him by the T'ang Emperor T'ai Tsung, and by using the canonized name to designate this religion. Chao Mêng-fu was himself a descendant of the Imperial house of Sung, which had placed Confucius upon the highest pedestal of honour, recognizing him as the equal of Heaven and Earth; but in the inscription for this Taoist temple, Chao exhausted his literary vocabulary in praise of Lao Tzŭ, whom he associated with the Yellow Emperor, a predecessor, and with the magician Chang Tao-ling, a successor. It will thus be seen that the T'ang dynasty founded Taoism, and the Yüan dynasty stabilized it.

The relation of Taoism to the mythological characters of China with all their fabulous deeds and mysterious theories of the universe, is complete. If we were to depend upon the views and records of the School of Letters (Ju Chia) we should have scant material, for we should be confined to the great names associated with the building up of an established government, and with the spread of the civilization instituted and developed by them. Studies in Buddhism lead us far afield into the early mythology of India. It is in Taoism as it now exists with its assumed original inspiration from the Yellow Emperor, that we find incorporated all the mythological characters of early China, and their theories of life and the universe.

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CHAPTER II

THE THREE EMPERORS

AN account of the myths of China may rightly take the Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti, as a central point of departure. He is the third of the Three Emperors, San Huang, but is the first to whom a distinct personality is assigned. The first Emperor, Fu Hsi, is a type of the Hunting Age of the early nomad tribes which settled China. The second Emperor, Shên Nung, typifies the Agricultural Age during which permanent settlements were established and agricultural pursuits became continuous. It is only with the Yellow Emperor that a semblance of human individuality is associated with the great deeds which brought about the beginning of Chinese civilization. In Huang Ti there may be gathered the achievements and glories of several individuals whose names are lost, but at least in him we have a mythological character as distinguished from the generic name of periods such as those of Fu Hsi and Shên Nung, who were entirely fabulous.

The "Chronology of the Han Dynasty" (*Han Li Chih*), carries the early chronology of China back to a period of more than two million years, divided into ten great epochs. The first of these was inaugurated by P'an Ku, the first created being and also the first creator. This epoch was called that of "The Nine Sovereigns" (Chiu Ti) and was followed by the epoch of "The Five Dragons" (Wu Lung) who were severally called eldest, second, third, fourth and youngest. They were also given the names of the five notes of the musical scale, and the names of the planets. The third epoch consisted of fifty-nine generations, the fourth of three generations, the fifth

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of six generations and the sixth of four generations, but no names have been assigned to any ruler in these four epochs. The seventh epoch had twenty-two sovereigns whose virtue was so conspicuous that their example was eagerly followed by the men of their generation. The eighth epoch had thirteen sovereigns, of whom the second was a ruler in modern Sze-

FIG. 4. THE THREE EMPERORS
HUANG TI, FU HSI AND SHÊN NUNG

chuan and there taught the people to make silk. In this epoch were two generations of "The Nest-builders" (Yu-ch'ao), four generations of "The Fire-producers" (Sui-jên), and eight generations of "Accomplishers" (Yung-ch'êng). The ninth epoch is a bridge between the purely fanciful and the real, and derives its name Shan T'ung from its virtue in transmitting the succession to one whose actions are based upon the fixed laws of the universe. The tenth and last of these initiatory epochs

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is represented as beginning with Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor, and it variously ended either with the Great Yü, founder of the Hsia dynasty, or with Wu, the founder of the Chow dynasty. Reference to these epochs is made only for the purpose of stating the belief that the early myths of the Chinese, as we now have them, are the result of the work of men during the historical period of China, who gathered together the legends, folk-lore, folk-songs, and all other available data, and arranged them in such systematic form as would explain the development of the civilization found by them at the beginning of the historical period. It will be noticed that these epochs end with the Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti, which is another reason for taking him as the central point of departure for mythological studies. No historical credence is attached by Chinese writers to this period of the ten epochs. It is recognized by all as entirely fanciful.

The Yellow Emperor is reputed to have derived this designation from having been born on the *wu ssŭ* day, which corresponds to the element Earth. He is also said to have been awarded the tablet (*jui*) by his predecessor, Shên Nung, which signified that he possessed the virtue of Earth (*t'u-tê*). Earth being yellow in colour, he came to be called the Yellow Emperor. His family name was Kung-sun and his given name, Hsien-yüan. His father was governor of Yu-hsiung, which is the modern city of Lo-yang. He was a man of upright character, and his wife, Fu-pao,was an accomplished woman who accompanied him on all his voyages. While they were visiting the tombs of Fu Hsi and Shên Nung on a spring evening, there appeared in the skies a dazzling light which surrounded the constellation of the Great Bear with a circle of gold. Upon their return home his wife found that she was pregnant, and after twenty-four months, brought into the world a male child. There were many wonderful omens at his birth, the sky decking itself with most beautiful clouds. From his youth the

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child appeared to be blessed with unusual qualities of mind and body. On the death of his father, he succeeded him as governor of the principality of Yu-hsiung.

The country was ravaged at that time by Ch'ih Yu, against whom the Yellow Emperor led the Imperial forces of Shên Nung to victory. He was then proclaimed Emperor by the Princes, among whom he selected the most illustrious as his Ministers of State. His consort, Hsi-ling Shih, introduced the culture of silk-worms and the production of silk fabric. This is the historical basis assigned to this mythical character. The other incidents of his life are recorded by Lieh Tzŭ and by the author of *Huang Ti Ping King Su Wên.* The Yellow Emperor is supposed to have gone in dreams to distant regions and places inhabited by spirits who walk on air and sleep on space as if on a bed. They neither sink in water nor burn in fire, and live without pain or sorrow or fear. After awaking from such a dream of three months duration, he taught the people how to control the forces of nature and their own hearts. After another long sleep he acquired the power of teaching, and governed the country for twenty-seven years with such success that it became as happy as a fairyland in which the inhabitants inhaled air and sipped dew in place of ordinary food. They were able to control all their natural passions, so that society lived according to the rules of perfect virtue.

In the *Su Wên* a conversation is recorded between the Yellow Emperor and Ch'i Po concerning medicine and natural science. The good man in most ancient times, according to the dialogue, held Heaven and Earth in his hands and grasped the principles of light and darkness, breathing pure air and preserving his spirit in its perfection; his flesh was obedient to his spirit. Hence he was able to attain immortality like that of Heaven and Earth. This type of good man became an ascetic and carefully preserved his soul so that he was able to wander through Heaven and Earth for countless years. The Yellow Emperor

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discoursed to his companion on the meaning of the four seasons, and then proceeded to unfold the system of the universe. There are three kinds of air, — that of Heaven (*t'ien-ch'i*), that of Earth (*ti-ch'i*), and that of the cycle (*yün-ch'i*). There is also an evil vapour which attacks men and must be kept away, for it is the origin of all disease. In this book Earth is represented as a body suspended in the air, moving eastward, while Heaven moves toward the west. The Yellow Emperor asked Ch'i Po to explain this, and he in reply described the constant motion of the five elements, metal, fire, air, earth and water, as similar to the motion of the sun, moon and planets in the heavens. The space above holds the pure essence of all living forms found on the earth. The Yellow Emperor asked: " Is not earth underneath? " to which the reply was given that earth is below man, but it is in the centre of space and is upheld by the great air surrounding it. These disquisitions on natural science are interlarded with discussions concerning medical treatments which could lengthen life to limitless years.

Although we have chosen the Yellow Emperor as a source from which the early myths of China evolve, attention also must be paid to his two imperial predecessors, Fu Hsi, and Shên Nung. Fu Hsi's official name as Emperor was T'ai Hao (" The Great Almighty "). He is represented as partly human and partly supernatural. His birth was miraculous and occurred in the vicinity of Kung-ch'ang in the present Province of Kan-su. The earliest extant representation of Fu Hsi is found on the stone tablets of Wu Liang Tz'ŭ in Shantung Province, 160 A.D., where he is accompanied by a female figure, the lower part of the bodies being in the form of intertwined tails of serpents. This being the earliest historical evidence available at the present time, it is clear that in the Han dynasty Fu Hsi was not considered as human. According to the *Shên Hsien T'ung Chien*, Fu Hsi discovered the " Eight Diagrams " (*pa kua*) in the following way. He was on the banks of the Mêng River and saw

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a monster of enormous height playing on the surface of the water. This monster had the body of a horse, scales of a fish, and also several feet. The lower parts of the body were covered with hair, and on its back it carried a tablet. Fu Hsi spoke to it and begged it to come up on the bank. The monster immediately complied with the request, and Fu Hsi took possession of the tablet. He found fifty-five lines which were intertwined with figures. He carried the tablet to Fu Shan where he studied it at his leisure, and as a result of his studies, he composed the Eight Diagrams. According to tradition it was Fu Hsi who instituted matrimony, and forbade marriage between two people of the same surname. He drove wild animals out of the country and discovered iron, with which he made hunting and fishing implements. He travelled eastward through the country which now is known as Shantung, Honan and Shensi. His capital city was at Ch'ên, near K'ai-fêng in Honan Province. He was the first to establish rules for writing, and to offer sacrifices to Heaven on an altar in the open. His most conspicuous work was, however, the discovery of the Eight Diagrams, or perhaps it would be better to say that the Eight Diagrams as found in existence at the beginning of the historical period of China, were responsible for the invention of the myth of Fu Hsi.

Shên Nung, known as the Earthly Emperor to distinguish him from Fu Hsi, the Heavenly Emperor, represents the age of agricultural pursuits. He is reputed to have been born on the mountain Lieh in the present Province of Hupeh. He was eight feet seven inches in height, and had the body of a man surmounted by the head of a bull. Three days after he was born he could talk, at the end of five days he could walk, at the end of the seventh he had a full set of teeth, and at the age of three years he was able to till the fields. He established the capital of his kingdom at Ch'ü Fu, the birthplace of Confucius. He is said to have invented the cart and various types of agri-

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cultural implements. He established markets at which the products of one part of the country could be exchanged with those from other parts. He studied plants and their uses in curing diseases of the body. In one day he discovered seventy kinds of vegetable poisons. He classified three hundred and sixty-five species of medicinal plants and wrote a book on them. He lived to the great age of one hundred and sixty-eight and then became an immortal.

Two other mythical tales of the period of the Three Emperors need to be mentioned. One is that of Ts'ang Chieh, the legendary inventor of the art of writing, who is said to have had four eyes. He derived his first inspiration to invent writing from noticing the marks of birds' feet in sand, and the special style of ancient characters, to the number of five hundred and forty, is known as "bird foot-prints writing" (*niao chi-wên*). The other is that of Nü Kua who is said to have been the sister and successor of Fu Hsi. The two characters of which her name is composed naturally lead to the surmise that she was a woman, though some early traditions discard the seeming implication of the name, and assert that Nü Kua was a man. The intertwining of her body with that of Fu Hsi on the bas-relief of Wu Liang Tz'ŭ suggests either that the two were brother and sister, or husband and wife. A third possible explanation which seems to me nearer the truth is that Fu Hsi was assisted during his reign by his sister Nü Kua. In the *Ti Wang Shih Chi* it is stated that Nü Kua had the body of a serpent and the head of an ox. She instituted marriage ceremonies and assisted her brother Fu Hsi in invocation of the gods. The statements of the *Shih Chi* are that Nü Kua had the endowments of a divine sage and succeeded her brother Fu Hsi as sovereign. Toward the end of her reign one of the feudal princes, Kung Kung, rebelled and sought to overthrow the influence of Nü Kua. He was defeated in battle, whereupon he struck his head against the Pu-chou Mountain and razed it to the ground. This

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shook the pillars of Heaven and destroyed the corners of the Earth. In order to repair the damage to the heavens, Nü Kua melted stones of five colours and cut off the feet of the tortoise in order to replace the four corners of the Earth. She burned reed grass to ashes which she used for stopping great floods, and thus rescued the land of Ch'i, which was the home of the later sovereigns of China.

In this chapter I have followed the written records in classing Fu Hsi, Shên Nung and Huang Ti as the Three Emperors. The bas-reliefs of Wu Liang Tz'ŭ have a different classification. Fu Hsi and Nü Kua together form the first panel, Chu Jung occupies the next, and the third is that of Shên Nung, Huang Ti being assigned a later place among the Five Sovereigns. This divergence in the two lists of the Three Emperors is thus seen to have been current in the Han dynasty, but as the list which I have adopted became the usually accepted one in later dynasties, it has seemed wise to discard my usual method of preferring the evidence of existing monuments to that of books, and to adopt the generally accepted list.

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CHAPTER III

OTHER PREHISTORIC EMPERORS

AS Fu Hsi symbolized the Age of Hunting, Shên Nung that of Agriculture, and Huang Ti that of Invention, so the Great Yao and Shun are the legendary models for an Imperial rule based on righteousness. These are the two early sovereigns whom Confucius taught his countrymen to regard as the model rulers whose virtues were resplendent to all generations. The *Shu King* says that Yao was universally informed, intelligent, accomplished and thoughtful, and that his glory filled the empire. The commentary of the annals of the "Bamboo Books" (*Chu Shu*) states that when Yao had been Emperor seventy years, a brilliant star appeared in one of the heavenly constellations, and phoenixes were seen in the courtyards of the palace; pearl grass grew and grain was abundant; sweet dews moistened the ground and crystal springs issued from the hills; the sun and moon appeared like a pair of gems and the five planets looked like threaded pearls. In the Imperial kitchen a piece of flesh was seen which was as thin as a fan. This, when shaken, made such a wind that all eatables were kept cool and did not spoil. On each side of the palace-steps grew a kind of grass which produced one pod each day up to the fifteenth of the month. On each following day of the month one pod shrivelled up, but did not fall. This was called the lucky bean, also the calendar bean. There was a great flood which was assuaged by the Emperor, but he attributed the merit of his work to his Minister Shun, in whose favour he wished to resign. On account of the flood he fasted and purified himself, building altars near the two rivers Ho and Lo, after which he

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selected a fortunate day and conducted Shun and other followers up the Shou Mountain. On the island of the Ho, five old men were seen walking about. These were the spirits of the five planets. They conversed together and said: "The Ho T'u will soon appear and inform the Emperor of an auspicious time. He who understands this is Huang Yao, each of whose eyes has

FIG. 5. GODDESS OF THE LO, LO SHÊN

two pupils." Thereupon the five old men flew away like floating stars and ascended into the constellation Mao (Pleiades). On the Hsin-ch'ou day of the second month, between daylight and dark, the ceremonies were all prepared. When the day began to decline a glorious light came forth from the Ho River, and beautiful vapours filled all the horizon; white clouds rose in the sky and a dragon-horse appeared bearing in his mouth a cuirass covered with scales, with red lines on a green ground.

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This dragon-horse ascended the altar, laid down the *t'u*-drawing, and departed. The cuirass was like a tortoise shell nine cubits broad. The *t'u* contained a tally of white gem in a casket of red gem covered with yellow gold and bound with a green string. On the tally were the words: " Gratefully presented to the Emperor Shun." It also said that Yü and Hsia would be the recipients of special orders from Heaven. The Emperor wrote down these words and deposited them in the eastern palace. After two years, during the second month, he led his Ministers to the Lo River into which he threw a round disk. After the ceremony he rested and waited for the close of the day, then a red light appeared; a tortoise arose from the waters with a writing in red lines on its back, and rested on the altar. This writing said that he should resign the throne to Shun, and accordingly the Emperor did so. This is a variant account of the origin of the "*ho t'u*" and "*lo shu*," i.e., of the graphic arts of painting and calligraphy.

It is said of Shun in the *Shu King* that he was in a low and undistinguished position when Yao heard of his great intelligence and first proved him in many difficult situations with the idea of making him successor to the throne. The " Bamboo Books " state that he had a miraculous birth. His eyes, like those of Yao, had double pupils, for which reason he was known as " Double Brightness." He had a countenance like a dragon, a large mouth and a black body. His parents disliked him. They made him plaster a granary, and then set fire to it; but the bird-made clothing which he wore enabled him to fly away. They put him in a well to dig it deeper, and then attempted to fill it with stones from above; but on this occasion he wore dragon-made clothing and was able to get out. Later he dreamt that his eyebrows were as long as his hair.

On the accession of Shun, the lucky bean grew about the stairs, and phoenixes nested in the courts. When the musical stones were beaten in the nine ceremonial performances all the

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beasts came frolicking one after the other, and a brilliant star appeared. In the fourteenth year of his reign, at a great performance with bells, resonant stones, organs and flutes, before the service was concluded there came a great storm of thunder and rain. A violent wind overthrew houses and tore up trees. The drum-sticks and drums were scattered on the ground and the bells and stones dashed about in confusion. The dancers fell prostrate and the director of music ran madly away; but Shun, keeping hold of the frames from which the bells and stones were suspended, laughed and said: "How evident it is that the Empire does not belong to one man. This is indicated by these bells, stones, organs and flutes." Thereupon he presented Yü to Heaven and made him perform ceremonies such as are undertaken only by an Emperor; then harmonious vapours responded on all sides and felicitous clouds were seen. They were like smoke and yet were not smoke; were like clouds and yet were not clouds; they were brilliantly confused, twisting and whirling. The officers in mutual harmony sang of these felicitous clouds, the Emperor leading the chorus and saying: "How bright are ye, felicitous clouds! In what good order are ye gathered together! The brightness of the sun and moon is repeated from morn to morn." All the ministers then came forward, and bowing low said: "Brilliant are the heavens above, where the shining stars are arranged. The brightness of the sun and moon ennoble our Emperor." The Emperor then again sang: "The sun and moon are constant; the stars and other heavenly bodies have their motions; the four seasons observe their rule. The people are sincere in all their services. When I think of music, the intelligences that respond to Heaven seem to be transferred to the sages and the worthies. All things listen to it. How thrilling are its rolling sounds! How does it inspire the dance!" When the great brightness was exhausted, the clouds shrivelled up and disappeared. Thereupon the eight winds all blew genially and

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felicitous clouds collected in masses. The crouching dragons came hurriedly out of their dens. Iguanadons and fishes leaped up from their deeps; tortoises and turtles came out from their holes, thus carrying Yü away to found the dynasty of Hsia. Shun then raised an altar at the Ho River, as had been previously done by Yao. When the day declined there came a fine and glorious light, and a yellow dragon came to the altar bearing on his back a *t'u*-drawing, on which lines of red and green were intermingled. The writing on this *t'u* was to the effect that Shun should resign in favor of Yü.

The Emperor Yü marked out the nine Provinces, followed the course of the hills, deepened the rivers, and defined the taxes on the land as well as the articles which should be presented as tribute. These are the statements of the *Shu King* concerning him. The "Bamboo Books" say that his mother was named Hsiu-chi. She was a falling star, and in a dream her thoughts were moved until she became pregnant, after which she swallowed a pearl and gave birth to a son. He had a tiger nose, and a large mouth; his ears had three orifices. When he grew up he had the virtue of a sage, and attained the great height of nine feet six inches. He dreamed that he was bathing in the Ho River and drank up all its water. He also had the happy omen of seeing a white fox with nine tails. As he was looking at the Ho River one day a tall man with a white face and a fish's body came out and said: "I am the spirit of the Ho. Wên Ming shall regulate the waters" (Wên Ming being the personal name of Yü). Having so spoken he gave the Emperor a chart of the Ho which contained necessary regulations concerning the control of the flooded waters; then he returned to the deep. Yü set about his work, and when he had finished, Heaven gave him a dark-coloured mace with which to announce his completed work. When the fortunes of the Hsia dynasty which he founded were rising, all vegetation was lux-

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uriant. Green dragons were seen, and from the Lo came the writing on the shell of the tortoise called "The Great Plan."

There is another myth concerning Yü which must not be omitted. While he was on his way south, in the middle of the river which he was crossing, two yellow dragons took the boat on their backs. All who were with him were afraid, but Yü laughed and said: "I received my appointment from Heaven and labour with all my strength to benefit man. To be born is the course of nature; to die is by Heaven's decree. Why be troubled by the dragons?" Hearing this the dragons went away, trailing their tails behind them.

The next of the great Emperors was the founder of the Shang dynasty. He is called T'ang, or Ch'êng T'ang, i.e., "T'ang the Successful." His family is reputed to have been of ancient descent, and before his own miraculous birth there had been at an earlier time another instance of this miracle. It is said that the lower part of his face was broad, and that the upper part tapered to a point. His face was white and whiskered, his body was larger on one side than on the other, and his voice was loud. He was nine feet high, and each of his arms had four joints. When he came east to Lo to see the altar that had been erected by Yao, he dropped a gem in the water and stood at some distance. Immediately yellow fishes leaped up in pairs. A black bird followed him and stood on the altar, where it was changed into a black gem. There was also a black tortoise with red lines forming ideographs, which said that the Hsia Emperor, Chieh Kuei, was a man of low principles, and that T'ang should supersede him. A spirit dragging a white wolf with a hook in its mouth, entered the court of the new dynasty Shang, which T'ang was called upon to found. During his reign silver overflowed from the hills, and all metals were plentiful.

The Shang dynasty continued for a period estimated to have been about six hundred years. It produced no outstanding fig-

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ures around whom mythical tales could be woven. Its best known figure is the tyrant Chou Hsin, whose cruelty brought about its downfall. His cruel deeds are notorious in later histories. He is represented as a man gifted with sharp senses, extraordinary mental ability and great physical strength. His wide knowledge enabled him to make light of the frequent remonstrances made to him by his Ministers, and his eloquence enabled him to gloss over his own vicious acts. He constantly boasted of his ability, and attempted to increase the reputation of his Empire by giving prominence to his own wonderful deeds. He was devoted to wine and debauchery, and was infatuated by his consort, Ta-chi, to whom he lent a willing ear. The deeds of this woman are recorded with the evident purpose of teaching the folly of an Emperor's yielding to the influence of a debauched woman. The *Shu King* says that she was shamelessly lustful and cruel; the most licentious songs were composed for her amusement, and the vilest dances exhibited. A palace was erected for her at Ch'i with a famous terrace, two-thirds of a mile in width, surrounded by a park which was stocked with the rarest animals. The expenditures for the building of this palace made necessary heavy exactions which provoked the resentment of the people. At Sha-ch'iu, which is the modern district of P'ing-hsiang in the Province of Chihli, there was still greater extravagance and dissipation. There was a pond of wine, and the trees were hung with human flesh; men and women chased each other about quite naked. In the palace there were places where large parties spent the whole night drinking and carousing. When these excesses brought about rebellion by the princes, the Empress Ta-chi protested that the majesty of the throne was not being maintained, that punishments were too light and executions too infrequent. She therefore devised two new instruments of torture, one of these was called " the heater," and consisted of a piece of metal made hot in a fire, which people were forced to take up in their hands.

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The other was a copper pillar covered with grease and laid above a pit of live charcoal. Culprits were compelled to walk across this pillar and when their feet slipped and they fell into the fire, Ta-chi was greatly delighted. This punishment was called "roasting." These fearful enormities caused the whole Empire to be filled with indignation. One of the worst instances of Chou's cruelty was his treatment of Pi Kan. Pi Kan was a relative of the tyrant, and being a man of good character, remonstrated with Chou upon the debauchery of the court. Chou became very angry and ordered the heart of Pi Kan to be torn out, saying that he had always heard that the heart of a man of superior virtue had seven orifices and that he wished to see whether or not his relative Pi Kan was what he claimed to be.

FIG. 6. PI KAN

During the reign of Chou Hsin the small principality of Chow came into prominence, and the Duke of Chow, canonized as Wên Wang, led in the rebellion which overthrew the Shang dynasty. The site of this principality of Chow was in the vicinity of the present city of Hsi-an, capital of Shensi Province. The younger son of the Duke of Chow became the first sovereign of the new dynasty which took its name from this small principality. He is known in history as Wu Wang. As might be expected, tradition has woven many wonderful tales around this founder of a dynasty which is considered by the Chinese as more responsible than any other for its wide-spread civilization.

The ancestry of Wu Wang is traced back to the Emperor Kao

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Hsin, whose wife became a mother in a miraculous manner. After the birth of her child, she decided to make away with him and left him in a narrow lane, but the child was attended by sheep and cattle so that he did not die. She then placed him in a forest where he was attended by a wood-cutter and his life preserved. She then laid him upon ice in the river, but a large bird came and covered him with one of its wings. Finally the mother made no further attempts to dispose of the child, but nursed him and brought him up, giving him the name of Ch'i or "Castaway." The lower part of this child's face was unduly developed, and his appearance was very extraordinary. When he grew up he became Minister of Agriculture to the Emperor Yao and rendered great service to the people.

The next step in the wonderful ancestry of Wu Wang is connected with Kung Liu, grandson of "Castaway." His virtues were so great that he was treated by the princes with the same ceremonies as were the right of an Emperor. Thirteen generations after Kung Liu, a lineal descendant, Chi Li, was born. It is stated that his birth had been foretold, as far back as the time of Huang Ti, when a prophecy had been proclaimed that "the chief of the northwest should become king in a certain year; Ch'ang should lay the foundations of kingly dignity, Fa exercise the judgments necessary to it, and Tan develop its principles." This Ch'ang whose birth had been foretold, was the son of Chi Li and was afterwards known as Wên Wang; Fa, son of Ch'ang, became Wu Wang, the founder of the Chow dynasty, and Tan became Chow Kung, i.e., Duke of Chow. From this account it will be seen that both prophecy and miracle are called in to account for the ancestry of this illustrious founder of a great dynasty.

Wu Wang's father, Wên Wang, is described as a man with a dragon's countenance and a tiger's shoulders. He was ten feet in height and had four nipples on his chest. He became chief of the West, Hsi Po, and made his capital city in Fêng.

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Fêng was the most important centre of the dukedom of Chow, and the location of the capital of China remained in its vicinity for many centuries. It was the capital at the dawn of Chinese authentic historical records, and this account of its having been chosen by the founder of the Chow dynasty may be accepted either as verbal tradition, or as a literary invention at the time when the first records were made.

To add greater dignity to the ancestry of Wu Wang, many other tales are recorded of his father, Wên Wang, the Duke of Chow, and his mother, T'ai Ssŭ. On an autumn day a red bird came to the capital with a writing in its beak which it put down at the Duke's door. He received it with reverence and found that the writing was to the effect that Chow should destroy the existing dynasty. The Duke was about to go out on a hunting expedition, and was told by one of the attendants that on his trip he would not secure a grizzly bear, but would be assisted by divine counsel. The hunting party went on its tour and found on the bank a man fishing, called Lü Shang (Tai Wang Kung). The Duke said to him that he had been wanting to meet him for seven years. Lü Shang hearing these words instantly changed his name, and speaking of himself as Wang or "Hope," replied that he had fished up a semi-circular gem on which was an inscription stating that Ch'ang, which was the Duke's personal name, would come and receive the gem. This was an omen that a dynasty should be established by his son.

Another tale told of Wu Wang's father is that he dreamt he was clothed with the sun and moon. In the first month of spring the five planets were in conjunction. A male and a female phoenix went about the capital city with a writing in their beaks which said: "The Emperor has no principles. He oppresses the people and has brought disorder to the Empire. He can be tolerated no longer by Heaven. The powerful spirits of the earth have deserted him. The conjunction of the five planets will brighten all within the four seas." This myth adds

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astrology to the two previous myths of prophecy and miracle in the account of the ancestry of Wu Wang.

Wu Wang himself is said to have had a remarkable appearance. His upper and lower rows of teeth were each only one piece of bone, and he had the restless eyes of a shepherd. When he was crossing the River Mêng a white fish leaped into his boat in the middle of the stream. He stooped down and picked it up. It was three feet in length, and under its eyes were red lines which formed the characters "Chou Hsin may be smitten." Over the top of these unfavourable characters the King wrote the one character meaning "dynasty," and immediately the other words disappeared. After this he burned the fish in sacrifice and announced the event to Heaven. At once fire came down from Heaven, but the fire gradually floated away in space and became a red bird with a stalk of grain in its beak. This grain was taken as a propitious omen for the prosperity of the country, and the fire as a direct response to the prayer of the new Emperor. After this he went to the east and conquered the whole country without difficulty. So easily was this accomplished that it is said that his soldiers did not need to stain their swords with blood, for the hearts of the people turned to him, recognizing him as a virtuous and noble ruler. Crops were abundant and the forest supplied timber for the building of an Imperial palace.

When Wu Wang died, his successor, Ch'êng Wang, was still young, and Tan, Duke of Chow, acted as regent for seven years. He established the institutions and music of the new dynasty. Spirit-like birds and phoenixes appeared and the mysterious bean again grew. The regent went with the new King to visit the Ho and Lo rivers. Having dropped a gem into the water and finished all the ceremonies, the King retired and waited until the day declined. Then rays of glory shone out and shrouded all the Ho, and green clouds floated in the sky. The green dragon came to the altar, carrying in its mouth a dark-

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coloured shell with a figure on it, which he placed on the altar and went away. On the shell in red lines were ideographs which the regent copied. The writing was prophetic of the rise and fall of the fortunes of the Empire down to the dynasty of Ch'in and Han. The King took a lute and composed a song in which he humbly stated that he personally had no virtue which would warrant the appearance of the phoenixes, and that their presence was due entirely to the virtue of the former kings whose influence still extended to the homes of his humblest subjects.

It is not necessary to discuss the many differences of the accounts found in the "Bamboo Books" and those of the *Shu King*. These relate chiefly to chronological data and to the narrative concerning the government of Shun and the labours of Yü. From the standpoint of mythology, the greatest difference is in the fuller accounts of supernatural and marvellous events recorded in the "Bamboo Books." In his redaction of the *Shu King*, Confucius pared these down, or entirely eliminated them in accordance with his own disbelief in the mysterious. The "Bamboo Books," in common with the *I King*, emphasized supernatural events and have preserved to posterity the ancient myths, so essential to an understanding of the current beliefs of later times.

No better illustration of the extraordinary divergence of views during the ancient days of China could be found than in contrasting the contents of the "Book of Changes" (*I King*), attributed to Wên Wang, the father of the founder of the Chow dynasty, with the *Chow Li*, attributed to Chow Kung, fourth son of Wên Wang. The *I King* is a book of occultism. In it the *pa kua* or "Eight Diagrams," are expanded into sixty-four, each of the original Eight Diagrams being composed of continuous or broken lines, or a combination of them. They were used for the interpretation of omens in the rites of divination. From this book have sprung all the mysterious investi-

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gations and practices of the Chinese race. In marked contrast is the *Chow Li* which treats of the establishment of government and its functions. The Emperor, as "Son of Heaven" (*t'ien tzŭ*) was surrounded by his Ministers and by the heads of the feudal principalities. His Ministers were the heads of the six departments of government (*liu pu*). The duties of each Minister were carefully specified. The plans of the Imperial palace were given in detail. All the routine of the personal life of the Emperor, such as his dress, his meals, the words which he should use on special occasions, and postures which he should assume in ceremonies, were carefully stipulated. Everything in this book relates to actual experience. To the logical minds of Western people, it seems inconceivable that two such opposing systems could coexist among the ancient Chinese people; it is stranger still to know that one individual mind could approve equally of both, but herein lies an understanding of the growth and development of Chinese civilization. Its glory has been its inconsistency, its mixture of the sublime with the popular, the dignified with the bizarre, the true with recognized faults. In antiquity the same mind accepted the stately ceremonials of the *Chow Li* and the crude mysteries of the *I King;* and withal it was not puzzled by their incompatibility. This frame of mind has continued through the centuries. Without an understanding of this peculiar feature of Chinese mentality, it is impossible to understand the wide currency of belief in their myths among a people severely iconoclastic in state ceremonials.

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CHAPTER IV

INTERMIXTURE OF EARLY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

THE intermixture in China of early beliefs is well illustrated by the jade objects prescribed for the Master of Religious Ceremonies in the *Chow Li*, as these objects are interpreted by Dr. Berthold Laufer in the fifth chapter of his book on "Jade." There were six jade objects with which homage was paid to Heaven, to Earth, and to the Four Points of the Compass. With the round tablet, *pi*, of green colour, homage was paid to Heaven. With the yellow jade tube, *ts'ung*, homage was paid to Earth. With the green tablet, *kuei*, homage was paid to the region of the East. With the red tablet, *chang*, homage was rendered to the region of the South. With the white tablet, *hu*, homage was paid to the region of the West. With the black jade of semi-circular shape, *huang*, homage was paid to the region of the North. The colour of the victims and of the pieces of silk used in sacrifices to the spirits of these several regions corresponded to that of the jade used for these purposes.

The commentary of the *Chow Li* adds definite instructions concerning the placing of these jade objects in the coffins of deceased members of the Imperial house. When the body was placed in the coffin the green tablet, *kuei*, was to the left and a divided tablet at the head. The white tablet, *hu*, was to the right, and the semi-circular one, *huang*, at the feet. The round tablet, *pi*, was to be placed under the back, and the jade tube, *ts'ung*, on the abdomen. In this way there was a representation

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of the brilliant cube, *fang-ming*, which serves as an emblem in the sacrifices. The round disk, *pi*, and the square tube, *ts'ung*, were by their separation symbolical of Heaven and Earth. The intimate co-relation between the jade objects used in the prescribed religious ceremonies and in the burial of the dead, is readily recognized.

The references of the *Chow Li* to these symbolic jade objects are in complete accord with our knowledge of the use of bronze vessels for religious worship. These vessels were used in family and national worship. In both instances they were associated with ancestral worship, which, according to the *Shu King*, had its origin in the times of the mythical Emperors. Legge points out that the title given in the *Shu King* to the Minister of Religion in the time of the Emperor Shun is that of "Arranger of the Ancestral Temple." The rule of Confucius that "parents when dead should be sacrificed to according to propriety," was doubtless in accordance with the practice that had come down from the earliest times of the nation. The spirits of the departed were supposed to have a knowledge of the circumstances of their descendants and to be able to affect them. Events of importance in a family were communicated to the departed spirits before their shrines; many affairs of government were transacted in presence of the ancestral tablet. When Yao turned over to Shun the business of government, the ceremony took place in the "Temple of the Accomplished Ancestor," to whom Yao gave the credit for his possession of the supreme dignity. During the life of Yao, Shun on every return to the capital from his visits of administration throughout the country, offered a bullock also before the shrine of this personage. In the same way when Shun found the business of government too heavy for him, and called Yü to share in it, the ceremony took place in the "Temple of the Spiritual Ancestor," the chief in the line of Shun's progenitors. In the remarkable narrative concerning the prayer of Tan, the Duke of

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Chow, for the recovery of his brother Wu Wang from a dangerous illness, and of his offering to die in his brother's stead, he raises three altars, one each to their father, grandfather and great-grandfather, and prays to them as if they in Heaven had charge of watching over their descendant. When he has ascertained by divination that Wu Wang will recover, he declares that this extension of the tenure of the throne has been renewed by the intervening merits of the three ancestors who had consented to the continuity of the ruling House. The Emperor P'an Kêng, 1401–1373 B.C., irritated by the opposition of the wealthy and powerful feudal monarchs to his measures, and by their stirring up the people to complain against him, threatened them all with calamities which would be sent down upon them by his great ancestor, T'ang. He told his Ministers that their ancestors and fathers, who had loyally served his predecessors, were now urgently entreating T'ang, in his spirit-state in Heaven, to send severe punishments on their descendants.

The inscriptions on bronze vessels of the Shang and Chow dynasties, though never fully explained or understood by Chinese scholars, are at least clear in one respect, which is, that they contain the names of men who subscribe themselves as sons, and also contain directions to descendants to the effect that these vessels should be carefully preserved through all subsequent generations. The natural inference is that these vessels were used in sacrificial ceremonies in the ancestral temples. On one of the best known sets of bronze vessels, the Ch'i Hou set now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the inscription indicates that the vessels were made for the Marquis of Ch'i, and these vessels were undoubtedly used in sacrificial ceremonies held in honour of the early rulers who brought this small principality into great prominence.

The intermixture of religious beliefs is further evidenced in the earliest accounts of the worship paid to the Supreme Ruler. The term Shang Ti, which has been adopted by translators as

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that of the Christian God, is associated in the *Shu King* with Huang T'ien, "Imperial Heaven"; and the four characters are written together as Huang T'ien Shang Ti, "Supreme Ruler of Imperial Heaven." The powers and prerogatives attached to the Supreme Ruler, Shang Ti, are attributed also to T'ien or "Heaven." Both these terms, Shang Ti and T'ien, are interpreted by the standard commentator of the Sung dynasty, Chu Hsi, as equivalent to Li. This term Li has been variously translated as "Order," "Law," "Principle," and "Abstract Right," but the word "Intelligence" seems to convey more of the original idea of Li in its meaning as the equivalent of Shang Ti and T'ien, than any of the other translations. The Supreme Ruler, or Heaven, was the great moral standard, and in accordance with their compliance with its decrees, earthly rulers were established upon their thrones; while acts in disobedience to its laws were punished by removal from their high positions. The *Shu King* says: "God acts in different ways; on the righteous he sends down all blessings, and on the wicked he pours out miseries." The first duty of rulers was to order their own conduct according to the immutable decrees of Heaven so that the people might follow their good example and lead virtuous lives. If the people were debauched it was a sure sign that the ruler was not living in accordance with the laws of Heaven and that someone would arise to take his place, as happened at the end of the Hsia and Shang dynasties. There is no evidence to show that the early Chinese were monotheists, in the accepted use of that term. The position of Shang Ti in early Chinese belief was similar to that of Jahveh among the early Hebrews, who believed that "the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods"; and also that "Thou, Lord, art exalted far above all gods." Among the Chinese the spirits of Heaven and Earth, of the land and the grain and of the Ancestral Temple, were associated with high Heaven, the Supreme Ruler. The *Shu King* states that "the early kings assiduously

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cultivated their natural virtue, serving and obeying the spirits of Heaven and Earth, of the land and the grain and of the Ancestral Temple; — all with a reverent veneration." In the same paragraph as this statement is another, warning the new successor to the throne that he was charged with obedience to the spirits of his ancestors, and cautioning him against disgracing their memory.

There have been many misconceptions as to the status of Shang Ti in early Chinese beliefs. These have arisen largely from the fact that the Chinese never made anthropomorphic images of the Supreme Ruler. They placed him high above all in stately grandeur and magnificent power. None was so great a God as this Supreme Ruler. Man was so inferior to Heaven that neither his body nor his mind could be compared to the glory and majesty of the Ruler who was high over all. But while no images, fashioned after the model of the human form, were made of the Supreme Ruler, the ancient Chinese made images of another sort which fitted in with the requirements of their abstract metaphysical minds. A round jade disk with a large hole bored in the centre, represented Earth. With these were jade shapes representing each of the Four Quarters, North, South, East and West. Laufer says that " the Chinese did not conceive of their cosmic gods as human beings, but as forces of nature with a well defined precinct of power, and they constructed their images on the ground of geometric qualities, supposed to be immanent to the great natural phenomena. The shapes of these images were found by way of geometric construction." The association of the spirits of the land and grain and of the Ancestral Temple with the worship of the Supreme Ruler, as equally binding upon princes and people, was not considered derogatory to the prestige of the latter. No prophets arose in China, as in Israel, to warn the people against this combination. The result was that whereas in Israel a tribal God came to be the only God, in China the Supreme Ruler became

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PLATE III

PO YÜN KUAN, TAOIST TEMPLE, PEKING

1. Third Court.
2. Fourth Court.

See pp. 23, 135.

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more and more lost sight of among the multitude of gods created in the likeness of man and other living creatures. High ethical precepts relating to Heaven were submerged in the rising tide of nature worship.

The Emperor Shun sacrificed to the Liu Tsung or "Six Honoured Ones." Legge suggests that "In going to worship the hills and rivers and the hosts of spirits, he must have supposed there were certain tutelary beings who presided over the more conspicuous objects of nature and its various processes. They were under God and could do nothing except as they were permitted and empowered by him; but the worship of them . . . paved the way for the pantheism which enters largely into the belief of the Chinese at the present time, and of which we find one of the earliest steps in the practice, which commenced with the Chow dynasty, of not only using the term Heaven as synonym for God, but using also the combination Heaven and Earth." These Six Honoured Ones have been variously explained by Chinese authors. Mêng K'ang says that they were the stars, heavenly bodies, father of the wind, master of the rain, arbiter of the cosmic space, and arbiter of fate. Another authority divides them into two classes of three each: the heavenly class consists of the sun, moon and stars, the earthly class of the T'ai Mountain, rivers and sea. Whatever may be the correct explanation, the worship paid to these Six Honoured Ones by the Emperor Shun proves conclusively that ancient Chinese worship was a system of polytheism in which the Supreme Ruler, high above all others, was the source and standard of all moral authority.

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CHAPTER V

COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGICAL THEORIES

IT is not possible to state that there is among the early Chinese any clearly defined theory of the origin of the universe. There is a vague ascription to Shang Ti of infinite creative power, which is involved in the worship paid to him as the Great Ruler of the universe. We have already pointed out, however, that the worship of Shang Ti was also associated with that of the spirits of the earth and air, as well as of ancestors. It was also considered to be on the same plane as the worship of Heaven, and the two seemed to have been interchangeable. Shang Ti, the Great Ruler, was Heaven, and Heaven was Shang Ti; both represented the Great Law to which everything in the universe is subject. It was not conceived of as a personal entity, but as an all-pervading force under which all things live and move and have their being. This conception fitted in well with the Conservative view as to the right of kings to rule and princes to decree justice. The regulation of all creation under the supreme rule of Heaven found an adequate illustration in the relation of the subjects to the ruler of a state. As the views of the Conservative School were chiefly occupied, in their final analysis, with the control of the state, it was deemed by them unnecessary to inquire too closely into the nature of the Great Ruler of the universe. For them it was enough to know that his power is omnipotent and his will supreme. Speculation concerning him was considered superfluous; their only desire was to comply with his immutable decree.

According to the most obvious interpretation of Chapter VI

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of the *Tao Teh King*, Lao Tzŭ seems to have ventured into the realm of cosmogony; and whatever may be thought of the trustworthiness of the text there can be no doubt of the fact that its conceptions have been adopted by all later writers of the School of Tao. Wang P'i of the third century A.D. interprets this difficult passage of the *Tao Teh King* in a sense which has been generally accepted as bringing out its original meaning; but Giles professed at one time that he had "not the remotest idea what it meant." Wang P'i says in explaining the meaning of *Ku Shên* ("the spirits of the valley"), that "a valley is the abode of vacuity and silence, which, though nothing else can be found in the valley, still remain without form." It is thus evident that the "spirits of the valley" mean the "spirits of vacuity and silence." I have translated *hsü* as "silence" in the sense of the word in Hood's sonnet:

FIG. 7. LIEH TZU

> "There is a silence where hath been no sound,
> There is a silence where no sound may be."

The whole passage (Chapter VI) may be translated: "The immortal spirits of the valley are called the great void. The great void is called Heaven and Earth. Continually it endures, working without conscious exertion." Stripped of all unknown implications, Lao Tzŭ's theory of the universe is that out of a great void came Heaven and Earth whose laws are immutable.

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There is little or nothing in Chuang Tzŭ or Lieh Tzŭ which amplifies or explains the mysterious Chapter VI of the *Tao Teh King*, but in the "History of the Great Light" (*Hung Lieh Chuan*), the philosopher Liu An, commonly known as Huai-nan Tzŭ (ob., 122 B.C.) has written what is in reality a commentary upon it. Huai-nan Tzŭ gave little attention to the ethical teachings of Lao Tzŭ; his concern was with the transmutation of metals and the search for the elixir of immortality. He gathered around him large groups of ascetics (*fang shih*), who devoted their time to occult practices and researches. This type of study led Huai-nan Tzŭ into the consideration of the phenomena of nature and of the original creative force.

Huai-nan Tzŭ emphasized the doctrine of spontaneity, which, he said, is the original law of creation. Dragons live in water; tigers and leopards in the mountains — all following the natural instincts given them by Heaven and Earth. When the spring wind blows the fragrant rain falls, bringing life to all things; birds hatch their young and animals multiply; plants and trees bud and leaf; the processes are not visible and yet they come to completion. Again when autumn comes with cool breezes and frosty air, the trees bow and are stripped of their leaves, reptiles and insects burrow into the ground or hibernate; still no outward compelling forces are to be seen. This law of spontaneity is also true in individual conduct. One should display the kindness which is innate in the human heart and avoid craftiness which defiles original innocence and purity. Following this law further, the philosopher does not need to hear sounds or see forms in his study of natural phenomena; for in the midst of silence and loneliness he is conscious of both. Everywhere we find around us the works of nature, yet nature itself cannot be found by searching, though on the other hand it forces itself upon our attention. If it be piled up, it will not be high; if it be dug down it will not be low; addition will not increase it, neither will subtraction diminish it; if planed it does

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not become thin, if cut it remains uninjured; it is neither deep nor shallow. "Shadowy and indistinct, it has no form; indistinct and shadowy, its resources have no limit." Nature is the great force that sustains Heaven and Earth, spreads to the four quarters, fills up all within the Four Seas, supplies light to the sun, moon and stars, and is divided into male and female principles, Yang and Yin. By its force the sky revolves, the earth is motionless; the wind rises, clouds gather, thunder rolls and rain falls. All are the result of the spontaneous action of nature. Huai-nan Tzŭ draws from this law the teaching that man should be in harmony with nature, tranquil and content. As an example of compliance with this law he states that, in early times, Fu Hsi and Shên Nung understood the laws of nature so that they were in communion with the Creator and were able to assist in ordaining all things within the universe. There are many difficulties to a full understanding of the meaning of some passages in the text of Huai-nan Tzŭ, but their general tenor seems to be in accord with this law of spontaneity.

The venerable mystic who revealed himself to Liu Hsiang, 80–9 B.C., while he was absorbed in his nightly study of the stars, told him the mysteries of creation. He explained also the evolution of nature from the five elements (*wu hsing*) — water, fire, wood, metal and earth. Before vanishing into space the mystic declared himself to be the Essence of the Great Centre — T'ai I Ching. Liu Hsiang was the author of the "History of the Han Dynasty" and the founder of the modern style of historical composition, but he spent all his leisure time in occult studies. From his time onward the scholars who belonged to the School of Tao paid scant attention to ethical problems, but gave all their attention to speculation about the origin of life, its prolongation and its mysteries; just as Chang Tao-ling a century later is the starting-point for the magical practices which have almost absorbed all else in Taoism. From Liu's time forward it is impossible to determine just when the

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various elements were introduced which went to form the cosmological systems as explained by writers during the T'ang and Sung dynasty in such books as the *Sung Li Ch'üan Shu*, and it is fruitless to attempt any chronological arrangement. There was much confusion of thought and divergence of view until general consent and wide acceptance were obtained for the following theory.

This theory is that the great self-existent, *wu chi*, produced finite existence, *t'ai chi*. The finite evolved the two essential elements of nature, Yang and Yin, which may be translated as the male and female principles, or as positive and negative, or as light and darkness. Chu Hsi's account says that first was the self-existent and then the finite. The finite moved and there was Yang (light or the male principle); the finite rested and there was Yin (darkness or the female principle). In other words the sexual principle as known in propagation of animal life was predicated of nature as manifested in the finite; but there was no attempt to describe the infinite self-existent in terms of human forms or human experience. This primordial cause was unknowable and unexplainable.

The *T'ai Hsi King*, which may be translated "The Classic of Breath Control," is a further elaboration of the sixth Chapter of Lao Tzŭ. This classic is without date, and the name of the author is not known, but from its contents the probability is that it was written during the Yüan dynasty, when so much attention was given among the Taoists to the control of breathing as one of the necessary steps in attaining immortality. The teaching of this book is that in the universe there is but one aura, *ch'i*, and from this comes all life and death. All finite things are produced from the vast and inexhaustible reservoir of this aura. For this reason the aura is called a mother, that is, the Yin or female principle of nature which combines with the Yang or male principle of nature to form the eternal Tao. The Yang, male principle, is the "Spirit of Vacuity" (K'ung Shên).

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The virility of this spirit unites with the receptivity of the aura to form the creative power of the universe. The spirit and aura both come from the original chaos, and neither of the two can ever be increased or diminished. It is evident that this theory of creation is a product of the Taoist School which devoted its attention chiefly to breath control. There are other cosmological theories in later books based upon Taoist teachings of occultism, many of them being intermixed with Buddhistic theories. The *Hsin Yin King*, or "Classic of Heart Revelation," is an example of such books, but their influence, either on the orthodox Taoist or on popular conceptions, has not been sufficient to warrant detailed consideration.

The scholarly interpretations of cosmogony which have been given above are entirely eclipsed by the vulgar theories of Taoism which have captured the minds of the majority of the Chinese people and which may be accepted as the teachings of present-day Taoism. According to these the Great Creator was P'an Ku. He came from the great chaos, and his body was four times the size of that of an ordinary man. Two horns projected from his head, and two tusks from his upper jaw. His body was thickly covered with hair. Knowing the principles of Heaven and Earth and the inherent changes of the dual fires of nature, he was able to excavate the deep valleys and pile up high mountains. He taught men to build boats and bridges; he understood the qualities of the rocks and was able to select those that were of value to mankind. With his hammer and chisel he wrought the universe into shape. From his high throne he issued his instructions to the people, whom he divided into the two classes of nobles and commoners. Above are the sun, moon and stars, he said, and below are the four seas. Listening to his discourse on the manner in which chaos was reduced to order, the people forgot their fatigue. After he had exhausted his instructions to them, one morning he disappeared and was never again heard of. Thus the impersonal

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powers of nature became personified in P'an Ku, who is entirely an anthropomorphic conception. According to Jên Fang who wrote the *Shuh I Chi* at the commencement of the sixth century, this myth was introduced into China by delegates returning from the Kingdom of Siam. It is not mentioned in the *T'ung Chien Wai Chi* by Liu Shu in the eleventh century.

Fig. 8. Yü Huang, the Jade Emperor

Another illustration of the personification of what had been originally considered as impersonal law or principle, occurred during the Sung dynasty, when the Shang Ti, or "Great Ruler" of the classical writings became Yü Huang, the Jade Emperor of Taoist teaching. After the disgraceful peace made by the Emperor Chên Tsung in 1005 A.D. with the Kitan Tartars, by which northern portions of the Empire were ceded away, the Emperor tried by every means to regain his prestige. He sought out the soothsayers, geomancers and interpreters of dreams. In this he was encouraged by his Minister, Wang Ch'in-jo, who explained to him that the revelations reputed to have been given to the early Emperors were only inventions to secure obedience, and that if the Emperor were to fabricate similar tales concerning himself, the people would be won back to loyal obedience. In 1012 A.D. the Emperor called his Ministers together and told them of a dream in which he had received a letter

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from Yü Huang which stated that Yü Huang had sent two letters to his ancestor, the founder of the Sung dynasty, and that now his Imperial ancestor was coming to pay him a visit. The Emperor later informed his Ministers that his august ancestor had duly appeared to him in accordance with the promise of Yü Huang. The Imperial History, *T'ung Chien Kang Mu*, records these facts, and states that this is the first appearance of Yü Huang, and that absolutely nothing is known of his origin or life. No one previous to the dream of the Emperor had ever heard Yü Huang spoken of. He was the invention of a deceitful Emperor aided by a Minister who was spoken of in the reign of his successor as "obscene." This revelation (*t'ien-shu*) to the Emperor Chên Tsung, was acquiesced in by another famous Minister, Wang Tan, in consideration of a large present by the Emperor, and his cowardice in doing so has been frequently commented upon by later writers.

Notwithstanding this fraudulent origin, Yü Huang received during the reign of the Emperor, Hui Tsung, 1101–1125 A.D., the highest possible honour in being given the title of Hao T'ien Yü Huang Shang Ti, which means "The Great Ruler, Almighty Heaven, Yü Huang," and to this title was prefixed the statement that at creation he was the arbiter of divination, the controller of time and the true embodiment of Tao. This identification of Yü Huang as Shang Ti, the Great Ruler of the universe, was the highest possible ascription that could be made to him.

After this time stories of the life of Yü Huang were invented. His father was Ching-tê, King of a fabulous country. The Queen was called Pao-yüeh, "The Precious Month." Having come to middle life she had not yet borne a male child. The King called priests to the palace to recite prayers with the object of obtaining an heir to the throne. During the following night the Queen had a dream in which Lao Tzŭ appeared to her, mounted on a dragon and carrying a male child in his arms.

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He flew through the air and came toward her, whereupon the Queen begged him to give her this child as heir to the crown. Lao Tzŭ consented and tossed the child to the Queen. She fell on her knees and thanked him. This was her dream. Awakening the next morning she felt herself pregnant, and at the end of a year brought forth a child. From his earliest years the child showed himself generous to the poor, giving away all the riches of the palace. On the death of his father he was crowned King, but after a few days, he ceded the crown to the Prime Minister and left the kingdom in order to become a hermit at P'u-ming in the Province of Shensi. Here he attained perfection of life and spent his time in healing the sick. In the midst of his deeds of charity he died. This is the fabulous account of his life as recorded in the *Sou Shên Chi.* To the common people of China, Yü Huang and P'an Ku are the great origin of all finite things, and to them worship is paid as the Great Creators.

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CHAPTER VI

SPIRITS OF NATURE

THE most persistent type of religious worship in China is that offered to the spirits of Earth. The ancient Emperor Shun is said to have offered sacrifices to the hills in the *wang* ceremony, and later mythical Emperors in the *lü* ceremony.; the Duke of Chow sacrificed a bull on the *shê* altar in his worship of the powers of nature. There were also the *fang* sacrifices to the Four Quarters of the Earth, the *yü* sacrifice in prayers for rain, the *chiao* sacrifice to Heaven at the winter solstice, and to Earth at the summer solstice, as well as the offerings on the *shê chi* altars to the spirits of the Earth and grain which were set up in every feudal state. There were also lesser rites connected with the worship of nature, such as the *tsu tien* sacrifice and oblation offered by travellers on the night previous to the commencement of a journey, the *pa* sacrifice made by travellers for good fortune in their undertakings, the sacrifice to the ancestor of horses in the *po* ceremony which is referred to in "The Book of Odes," the sacrifice at the end of the year which was called *cha* in the Chow dynasty, and *la* in the Ch'in, and which was offered in thanksgiving for the harvest, the *yo* sacrifice in the spring and the *ti* sacrifice in the autumn, both of which were attended by the ruler and all the princes, the *kuei* sacrifice for averting evil influences and the *no* sacrifice for the same purpose.

The *Li Ki* or "Book of Rites" records that the princes offered sacrifices to the spirits of the Earth and of agriculture — *shê chi*. The early Chinese were an agricultural people and their thoughts naturally turned toward some deities to whose

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influence could be ascribed the blessings of good harvests. *Shê* was the spirit of earth, and *chi* the spirit of grain; together they combined the idea of gods of agriculture, as the Emperor Shên Nung typified the origin of the cultivation of the soil. The spirits of the earth were honoured in different measure according to the extent of the territory over which they were supposed to preside. Some were local, others extended throughout the area of a duchy or feudal principality, while one spirit was worshipped by the Emperor as being the patron of agriculture throughout the Empire. According to the generally accepted tradition the first person who was deified as the national god of the soil, T'u-ti Shên or Hou-t'u Shên, was Ko Lung. He is said to have been a descendant of the legendary Emperor, Shên Nung, in the eleventh generation. Ko Lung was the Minister of Public Works during the reign of Chuan Hsü, the last of the Five Emperors, and distinguished himself by his zeal and ability. This position as patron god of the soil has been maintained by Ko Lung with only two brief intervals, of which one was during the reign of the Emperor P'ing Ti of the Han dynasty, and the other at the beginning of the Ming dynasty.

The Li Shê, as referred to in the *Shih Chi,* was the place where worship was paid to the gods of the soil. It is interesting to note that there was no fixed prescription as to the amount of the sacrifice as in all other ceremonies, but that the people of a district were expected to make offerings according to their ability, rich districts offering more than poor ones. Another important phase of this early nature worship is that in it occurred the first instances of the personification of spiritual beings. The Father of Husbandry, T'ien Tsu, is spoken of in the *Shih King* or "Book of Odes" (II. 6, VII. 2) as a personality in the same sense as ancestors. This personality was that of departed human spirits, and was considered in a different category from that of the living; but it was nevertheless distinctly modelled after the human form. This first known instance of

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anthropomorphism in early Chinese worship is recorded as having occurred in the Chow dynasty, and there is no available knowledge of its extension to other objects of worship which continued to be regarded as abstract forces, principles or laws.

These local deities impersonated the source of the kindly fruits of the earth in the district where altars were erected or offerings made. The local deities of a rich, prosperous district were on the same footing as those of a poor one. There is no record of the use of a local god for tribal supremacy or tribal propaganda. If prosperity reigned in one district, the local god of the soil was thanked by the presentation of costly offerings, but he was not heralded as greater than the local gods of neighbouring districts, nor made the occasion of hostile attacks upon supposed inferiors. There were no jealousies and quarrels among different localities based upon the help of superior local deities, as there were between the Israelites on the one hand and the tabernacles of Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarenes on the other. These deities were dependent for their prestige on the quality of the soil where they were worshipped, and the early Chinese would have thought of carrying the fertile soil of one district into the sterile fields of another, as soon as of transferring a local deity from its own habitat to another place. The deity was the essential essence of the local soil and could not be detached from it. Thus everywhere there was worship offered to these gods on the basis of their perfect equality. This was not henotheism, for over and above this local deity who could control the visible world of matter was Heaven, Supreme Ruler of the invisible forces of nature.

Worship of nature among the ancient Chinese was national, tribal and local; at the present time it remains national and local. The great national centre is the Temple of Agriculture in Peking, which is a large enclosure on the west side of the street opposite to the Temple of Heaven. Here in the spring

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the Emperor was accustomed to turn over three furrows with an especially ornamented plough drawn by cows. As a local religion it is found everywhere in China, even in the sparsely populated agricultural districts of Manchuria and Mongolia, where no Buddhist or Taoist temples have been built. Scattered through the fields, on roadsides, on the streets of country hamlets, small structures are seen, which are often not more than four by six feet in size. These testify to the permanence and universality of nature worship.

FIG. 9. T'U-TI AND HIS WIFE

Theoretically nature worship is divided into worship of the Four Quarters and the Centre, as may be seen in the raised platform in the inner enclosure of the Central Park, Peking. Actually throughout the country nature worship is offered to the local deity, T'u-ti lao-yeh. This deity is usually some local celebrity who has been honoured in his life-time for benevolence or for his exceptional character, and at death has been elevated to the rank of protector of the neighbourhood. Anyone after death may be selected for this honour. When misfortune has overtaken a place and it has been relieved by the efforts of some individual, this man is almost certain at death to be selected as the local deity to replace the one whose usefulness had expired, as shown by his inability to avert calamity. A man born in a village, who has become a high official or a prominent military leader, or a

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prosperous merchant or a great scholar, and who had not forgotten his birthplace by failing to contribute to its well-being, is almost certain at death to be made a T'u-ti lao-yeh or local deity.

There is no other such extensive source of myths as is afforded in the selection of these local deities. They are recorded in the *Sou Shên Chi*, and it is from this book that the following tales are taken. In the last years of the Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 A.D., lived Chiang Tzŭ-wên. A native of the district which is now known as Yang-chow in Kiangsu Province, he became notorious as a drunkard and a libertine. He announced that his bones were of a bluish-green colour and that therefore he expected to be deified. When he was Commander at Mu-ling, near Nanking, he pursued a robber to the foot of Chung Shan, now known as Purple Mountain. The robber turned on him and fatally wounded Chiang in the forehead. A few years later the Emperor Ta Ti of the newly-founded Wu dynasty, was surprised to meet Chiang on the road. He was mounted on a white charger, carried a white fan, and was accompanied by a retinue such as he had during his life-time. Chiang said to the Emperor: "You are having the extraordinary sight of a spirit. I must be made a local god, T'u-ti Shên." The Emperor was greatly perturbed and conferred upon him the title of Marquis of his capital city, Nanking, gave him an official seal, and erected a temple in his honour. He changed the name of Purple Mountain from Chung Shan to Chiang Shan, and made Chiang the local deity in charge of the protection of the Mountain.

This is only one example, and not too creditable, of the choice of a deceased personage as a local deity. In most cases the selection is made for better reasons than in this one just quoted. Many great warriors have been deified in their native places or in localities where they have lived. P'êng Yü-lin, the famous Hunan General of the last generation, has become the

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protector of Hu-k'ou at the mouth of the Poyang Lake. Yo Fei, the great General whom the Sungs appointed in the twelfth century to repel the encroachments of the Golden Hordes of Tartars, is buried at the side of the West Lake. He was posthumously granted the title of the Prince of O (modern Hupeh), but his princely rank has not prevented the farming people of Hangchow district from making him a local protective deity, T'u-ti lao-yeh. It does not always happen that the local deity was some particular individual who lived at a certain time; in many instances, and it might be safe to venture in most instances, he is only the general indefinite spirit of the soil and has no connection with any deceased individual.

In the small shrines the deity, T'u-ti lao-yeh, is sometimes, though rarely, found alone. In almost every instance a female figure is seated at his right. She is known as his wife, T'u-ti nai-nai. I have not been able to trace this custom of associating a woman with the deity to any date earlier than the middle of the Ming dynasty, but as yet little information on this question is available. In larger local shrines other deities are introduced, such as the god of wealth, Ts'ai Shên, whose horse stands at the side of the shrine, and the god of healing, Yo Wang. Sometimes other lesser deities are also given places, such as the god who controls smallpox and the god who controls cholera. Reference has already been made in the Introduction to Hou-chi, the patron of grain, the product of the soil. He was Director of Agriculture in the reign of the Emperor Yao, and sacrifices were offered to him during the Hsia dynasty. According to the *Shih Chi*, sacrifices were offered to him at the same time as to Heaven during the reign of Ch'êng Wang, second Emperor of the Chow dynasty. The altar for this purpose was erected in the vicinity of the capital city. In connection with another patron of grain, Yin Hung, an interesting myth is narrated in the *Fêng Shên Yen I*. When Yin Hung was twelve years of age the Empress of the tyrant Chou sought to take his life. He

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had already arrived at the place of execution when two immortals rescued him in a whirlwind and carried him off to a safe retreat on the mountain Tai Hua. He afterwards came out to fight on the side of the supporters of the Shang dynasty against the Chows, but this so outraged the Chow General that he pulverized Yin Hung with the Eight Diagrams. After death he was canonized as patron of good harvests.

A myth is connected with the worship of Hou-t'u, who in modern temples is represented as a woman. This was originally worship of the spirit of the earth, then it became a worship of individuals who were honoured as patrons of the soil, and deceased Emperors or Empresses were designated as this deity. Since the early part of the Ming dynasty the god has been transformed into a goddess, Hou-t'u nai-nai. The general facts concerning the evolution of this worship are given in the book *Wu Li T'ung K'ao*, but no explanation is given of the change of sex of the deity.

FIG. 10. HOU-T'U

Another spirit which is now universally worshipped throughout China is the god of the city, Ch'êng Huang. He is mentioned in Chinese literature first in the annals of the Northern Ch'i dynasty, 550–577 A.D., where it is said that a respectful countenance and dignified prayer in the worship of Ch'êng Huang will be answered by many blessings. During the T'ang dynasty, when everything was given an origin in early history, Ch'êng Huang was interpreted as being the same as Shui Jung,

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one of the "Eight Spirits" (Pa Cha), to whom the Emperor Yao offered sacrifice, according to the *Li Ki*. There are forms of prayer written for his worship in the T'ang dynasty by Chang Shuo and Chang Chiu-ling, the famous littérateurs. In the

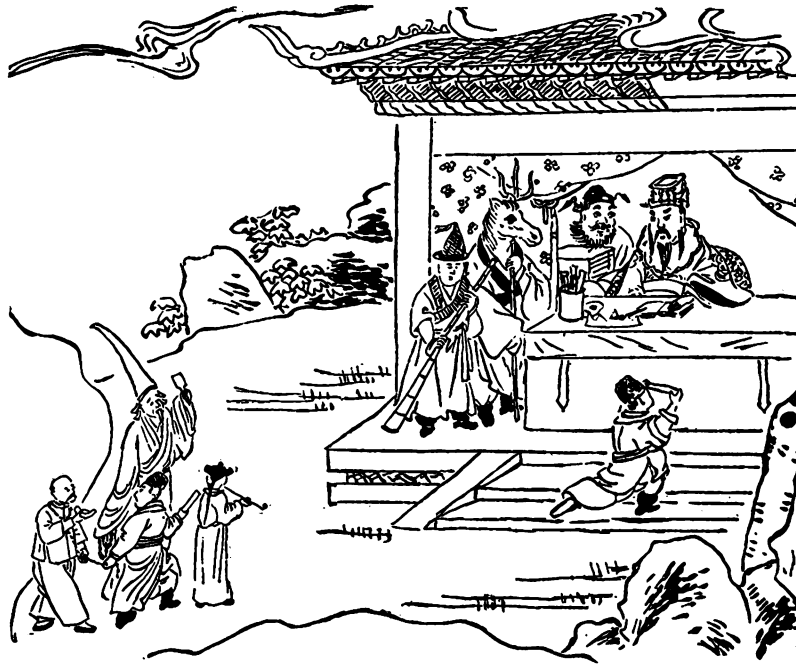

FIG. 11. CH'ÊNG HUANG

Sung dynasty worship of Ch'êng Huang was wide-spread, and he was ennobled as a Duke in every prefecture, a Marquis in every department, and an Earl in every county. During the reign of Hung Wu, in 1382, temples in his honour were declared to be public government property, and it was ordered that sacrifices should be offered to him. In the Manchu dynasty Ch'êng Huang was included in the prescribed regulations among those to whom regular sacrifices should be offered. With Ch'êng Huang is associated his wife, for whom special rooms

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are set aside in the temple. The growth of this T'ang dynasty myth into a national cult is one of the most remarkable incidents in Chinese mythology and is an evidence of the great influence of Imperial patronage. The connection between Ch'êng Huang and Shui Jung rests solely upon the identity of the original meaning of the two names. Both have the meaning of a

Fig. 12. Sa Chên-jen

"city moat." By connecting the newly-invented Ch'êng Huang with the mythical spirit, Shui Jung, to which the Emperor Yao sacrificed, the T'ang scholars gave a dignity to the new deity which he could not have attained in any other way. Shui Jung is only mentioned casually in the *Li Ki* and was not singled out by later generations as worthy of greater respect than any of the other "Eight Spirits." It was not until the

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T'ang dynasty that his name was selected as a peg upon which to hang the legend of Ch'êng Huang.

Of the five sacred mountains, T'ai Shan in Shantung Province has been most closely connected with religious observances. Early Emperors are reputed to have visited it. Here Confucius stood and had a view of the whole empire. The Emperor Shih Huang of the Ch'in dynasty is reputed to have set up a tablet during his visit, and a rubbing of its inscription is still preserved in the Tai Miao in T'ai-an city. The entire character of the worship on this famous mountain was changed after the visit, in 1008 A.D., of the Emperor Chên Tsung of the Sung dynasty. This Emperor had probably been informed of the tales connected with the daughter of Tung Hai who appeared to Wên Wang. In his book *Po Wu Chih*, Chang Hua, 232–300 A.D., says that when T'ai Kung Wang (the famous Minister of the Emperor Wên Wang and the preceptor of Wu Wang) was Governor of Kuan-t'an, for a full year there was a severe drought and no sound of wind was heard. In a dream Wên Wang saw a woman who was weeping bitterly. He inquired the reason for her grief and she replied: "I am the daughter of Tung Hai ('Eastern Sea') and am married to Hsi Hai ('Western Sea'). Tomorrow I shall return eastward to Kuan-t'an. You are a man of high principles and distinguished nature so that I do not dare to disturb you by returning home in a whirlwind." The Emperor Wên Wang on the following day ordered the recall of T'ai Kung Wang from his distant post, whereupon the woman carried out her purpose of coming back and brought with her a copious shower of rain accompanied with wind. She thus became known as the Lady of T'ai Shan.

Another account of this woman is given by Chang Êr-ch'i who lived at the close of the Ming and the beginning of the Manchu dynasty. In his book, *Hao Ang Hsien Hua*, he quotes from a romantic history, *Pai Shih*, that during the Han dy-

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nasty a lapidary fashioned two statues, one of the "Golden Lad" (Chin T'ung), and one of the "Jade Lady" (Yü Nü). During the Five Dynasties the hall of the temple in which these stood, collapsed and the statues fell down. The Golden Lad was broken in pieces, but the Jade Lady was submerged in a pool. When the Sung Emperor, Chên Tsung, visited T'ai Shan in 1008 A.D., he stooped to wash his hands in this pool. He found a stone statue floating on the surface. It was taken out and found to be the Jade Lady. He ordered his attendant Minister to erect a temple in her honour and conferred upon her the title of T'ien Hsien Yü Nü Pi Hsia Yüan Chü ("First Lord of the Blue Sky, Heavenly Fairy, Jade Lady"). This account is also given in the "Historical Records" of Shantung (*Shan Tung K'ao Ku Lu*). There are many shrines to this Lady on the mountain.

FIG. 13. JADE LADY, YÜ NÜ

There are no myths which have general currency associated with any other of the five sacred mountains. T'ai Shan has absorbed all the interest of the Taoists, and in its name as Tung Yo, "Eastern Peak," it has been the object of worship in every large centre where Taoist influence flourishes. The Tung Yo Temple, outside the Ch'ao Yang Mên, is one of the most beautiful temples of Peking, and has been under Imperial patronage since the time of the Yüan dynasty. The myths concerned with the four sacred hills of Buddhistic worship, P'u-t'o,

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Chiu-hua, Wu-t'ai and O-mei, are all foreign in their origin and do not call for attention among national legends.

T'ien Hou, goddess of the sea, is reputed to have been the sixth daughter of Lin Yüan of the P'u-t'ien district of Fukien Province, who lived during the Sung dynasty. From childhood she possessed supernatural powers. Her brother carried on a sea-trade. Whenever a great wind arose at sea, she closed her eyes and went forth in her divine power and rescued her brother.

Fig. 14. T'ien Hou

She died at twenty years of age, but continued to exercise her spiritual powers on the sea. She is worshipped by all sea-faring persons. She was canonized by the Emperor Yung Lo, 1402–23A.D., of the Ming dynasty, as "Heavenly Consort" (*t'ien fei*). There is a large temple in her honour on the North Soochow Road, at the corner of Honan Road, Shanghai, which was for many years used as the home of envoys going from or returning to China. She is also worshipped by persons journeying on rivers and canals. Ch'uan Hou, goddess of streams,

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is a variation in name of this goddess. There is also a ruler of water, Shui Chün, who rides on a horse in the water and has a human form. He is followed in his course by fish. In the latter part of the Han dynasty he is said to have been seen during a sacrifice to the rivers.

The wind god is called either Fêng Po or Fêng Shih. He is identified with the constellation Sagittarius, as strong winds come from the north-west. The rain god, Yü Shih, is associated with the constellation Hyades in the south-west. These two controllers of wind and rain are mentioned in the *Chow Li.* There is another deity, Yen Kung, who has power to calm wind and waves. The Emperor Ta Ti, 222–252 A.D., of the Wu dynasty, is said to have erected an altar to Yen Kung outside the West Gate of Shanghai. This deity protected Shanghai during an attack of pirates in the reign of Chia Ching, 1522–1567 A.D., by causing a huge tidal wave to swamp their boats during the darkness of the night.

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CHAPTER VII

DOMESTIC RITES

RELIGIOUS ceremonies connected with the home are celebrated at the New Year season and on special occasions such as birthdays, departure on journeys and moving into a new residence. These domestic ceremonies are usually spoken of as the "five sacrifices" (*wu ssŭ*) — (a) the hearth (*tsao*), (b) the portal (*mên*), (c) the house (*hu*), (d) departure on journeys (*hsing*), and (e) the interior of the residence (*chung-liu*). These ceremonies all originated among the early inhabitants of China, though the present forms of observance came into vogue centuries later. None of them show traces of any foreign influence.

FIG. 15. TSAO SHÊN, GOD OF THE HEARTH

Worship of the god of the hearth, Tsao Shên, is universal. On the night of the twenty-fourth day of the twelfth moon elaborate offerings of food and wine are arranged before a paper image of this god, after which the image is burned, together with horses, chariots, paper money and domestic utensils, whereupon Tsao Shên ascends to Heaven to make his report to the Most High regarding the condition and prospects of the family. In the hands of this god is the prosperity or adversity of the household, depending wholly upon the statements which he makes concerning its ideals and practices.

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It is generally agreed by historical writers that the first offering to the Prince of the Furnace, Tsao Chün, as he was originally called, was made by the Emperor Wu Ti, 140–86 B.C., of the Han dynasty. A mystic named Li Shao-chün assured the credulous monarch that he had received from the Prince of the Furnace the double blessing of freedom from growing old and from eating in order to live. He referred to the knowledge of alchemy possessed by the Emperor Huang Ti by which he was able to produce gold, and thus make a golden table-service which caused the food served in it to confer immortality upon those who partook of it. The Emperor Wu Ti demanded to see an image of this new god, and one night when he had already retired behind the curtains of his bed, Li Shao-chün exhibited it to him. This satisfied the curiosity of the emperor and he decided in 133 B.C. to offer a solemn sacrifice to the god in the hope of being able to produce gold and to obtain immortality. Li Shao-chün was taken into the palace, and a year later attempted a bolder trick. He wrote a number of mysterious sayings on silk which he caused a bull to eat. He then assured the Emperor that he would find marvellous writings in the stomach of an animal. Accordingly the bull was brought forward as the animal which had been specified by Li, and when it was slaughtered the writing on silk was found, but, unfortunately for Li, the Emperor recognized the penmanship to be that of Li himself. He ordered Li to be executed, but continued his sacrifices to the god. At this time, i.e. in the second century B.C., the chief function of this god was supposed to be the control of the furnace in which metals could be transmuted into gold and the pill of immortality produced.

It is narrated by another writer that during the reign of the Emperor Hsüan Ti, 73–48 B.C., the Prince of the Furnace (Tsao Chün) appeared to the Emperor in human form and called himself by the name of Ch'an Tzŭ-fang, which suggests a connection with Buddhistic propaganda. Ch'an Tzŭ-fang

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wore yellow garments and his hair fell unkempt over his shoulders. The Emperor was greatly impressed by this appearance and offered the sacrifice of a lamb in his honour. Ch'an Tzŭ-fang received many emoluments from the Emperor. It is said that his great-grandson was the uncle of the Empress, Lieh Hou, consort of the Emperor Kuan Wu, 25–58 A.D.

Between the Han and Sung dynasties the Prince of the Furnace (Tsao Chün) whose powers were connected with alchemy, was transformed into the god of the hearth, Tsao Shên, the word *tsao* meaning both "furnace" and "hearth." As far as I know there are no records of the way in which this change took place, but the probability is that it occurred during the first years of the T'ang dynasty, when the process of creating new deities by the Taoists, and of ascribing new powers to deities already known, flourished at the height of its popularity. The first historical reference to the universality of the worship of the god of the hearth at the close of the year occurs in a collection of poems called *Shih Hu Tz'ŭ*, by Fan Ch'êng-ta, who lived in the reign of the Emperor Kao Tsung, 1127–1162 A.D., of the Southern Sung dynasty. The poet says that every family made presents to this god preparatory to his departure to present his report of family affairs to the Ruler of Heaven, but no account of the origin of the custom is given. The poet refers to the custom of worshipping this god as being universal in the country at that time. It needed no explanation to those for whom his poem was written.

There is much intermixture of the conceptions concerning the god of the hearth, Tsao Shên, and the god of fire, Ho Shên. The origin of both is traced back to Chu Jung, one of the five ancient sacrifices (*wu chi*) of the Hsia dynasty. In the Yüeh-ling Chapter of the "Book of Rites" (*Li Ki*), it is stated that Chu Jung is the god of the Fourth Month. The *T'ung Chien* ("Historical Annals") explains that Chu Jung refers to a grandson of the legendary Emperor, Chuan Hsü, 2513–

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2435 B.C., who was an officer of fire (*Ho chêng*). Chu Hsi, the standard commentator on the Confucian classics, identifies Chu Jung as *tsao*, i.e. "furnace" or "hearth," but this is only one of several explanations of the "five sacrifices," a subject on which only little information is available. Another interpretation of Chu Jung makes it equivalent to Ho Shên, the god of fire, presumably on account of the constant interchange of the use of *tsao*, "furnace" or "stove," for the fire, *ho*, con-

FIG. 16. MÊN SHÊN, GUARDIANS OF THE PORTALS

tained in it. In the Han dynasty five soldiers were grouped together as a mess and used one *tsao* ("cooking range"). The head man of the mess was called *ho po* and not *tsao po* as might have been expected, thus showing the use of these two words *tsao* and *ho* as having one meaning in that connection. From this it may be justly inferred that these two words are used interchangeably in the names of these two deities.

At the New Year season the double doors at the entrance of every house are decorated with the pictures of two guardians, Mên Shên. These are usually in military dress with swords, arrows or spears in their hands, and are reputed to ward off all evil influences. These pictures are not alike in various parts

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of the country. According to the *Fêng Su T'ung* the earliest was that of Ch'êng Ch'ing, an ancient warrior who is represented with a long outer garment and carrying a sword. Another early representation was that of Ching K'ê who died 227 B.C., and who was a bold adventurer. He plotted to slay the Prince of Ch'in, but lost his life in the attempt. The two brothers, Shu Yü and Yü Lei were also portrayed as guardians of the portal, but there is no further account of them than that they were noted warriors of antiquity. From the time of the first Emperor of the T'ang dynasty, Ch'in Ch'iung and Hu Ching-tê have been most commonly represented as the two guardians. These were two statesmen who offered their services to the Emperor T'ai Tsung when he was nightly disturbed by evil spirits during a serious illness. They promised to remain at the gate of his palace throughout the whole night. During their vigil no spirits interfered with the repose of the Emperor, but it was at the expense of the health of his Ministers. After a few days the Emperor called an artist to the palace and had portraits made of the two Ministers in the hope that these would have the same effect as the actual presence of the men themselves. He had these portraits attached to the doors and, true to his expectations, they had the same effect of warding off the evil spirits as the presence of the statesmen. The custom rapidly spread until it is now universal in the country. In official residences there are four guardians, two military and two civil.

FIG. 17. T'S'AI SHÊN, GOD OF RICHES

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The god of riches, Ts'ai Shên, is worshipped universally in families during the first days of the New Year, usually on the fifth or eighth of the first moon. He is usually represented as a visitor who desires to enter the home and is accompanied by many servants carrying treasures which he is ready to dispense freely to those who offer him obeisance. His origin is traced back to Chao Kung-ming, a hermit from Mount O-mei in

FIG. 18. CHAO KUNG-MING, GOD OF RICHES

Szechuan, who supported with magical incantations the Shang dynasty in its conflict with the men who founded the Chow dynasty. When Chiang Tzŭ-ya was aiding the cause of the Chows he decided that he must destroy the supernatural assistance which Chao Kung-ming was giving to the Shangs. Chiang made a straw effigy of Chao before which he recited incantations for twenty days. On the twenty-first day he shot an arrow of peach-tree wood from his bow made of mulberry-tree wood, hitting the effigy in the heart. At this very moment Chao

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Kung-ming, who was in the camp of the enemy, was seized with mortal illness and died. During a subsequent visit to the deity Yüan Shih T'ien Tsun, Chiang Tzŭ-ya was commanded to bring into the god's presence the deceased Chao Kung-ming, whereupon Chiang was led to express regrets for having killed Chao, and to praise the virtues of his life. In the name of the deity Yüan Shih, he pronounced a decree canonizing Chao Kung-ming and promoting him to the presidency of the Ministry of Riches. This is the account given in the *Fêng Shên Yen I.* In addition to the family worship of the god of riches many temples have images of him to which incense is offered, especially during the first moon.

FIG. 19. CHIANG TZŬ-YA

The interior of the home (*tsê*) is distinguished from the exterior which is described by the term *hu.* This interior is also called the *chung-liu,* originally the air shaft which afforded light and air to homes excavated in the sides of hills. There are still many people who live in these excavated houses in the hills of Honan, Shansi and Shensi. This air shaft, being in the centre of the house, was the place where the family god was placed and the god himself came to be known by the name of the shaft, Chung-liu. In parts of the country where ordinary houses are constructed of

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brick, the usual name for the household god is Tsê Shên. I have not been able to find an account of the origin of this custom, although there can be no doubt that it has been observed from the earliest antiquity. This deity has never been associated with any particular individual.

Another family ceremony, mentioned in the *Tso Chuan*, is that of those moving into a house offering sacrifice to all persons who had resided at any previous time on the site. It is recognized that previous to their own residence in this particular spot countless generations have lived in the same place. The object of the sacrifice is to show respect to those departed ones who in their day were familiar with this particular spot where the family has come to live.

FIG. 20. SHOU HSING, NAN-CHI LAO-JÊN GOD OF LONGEVITY

At the time of birthday celebrations, offerings are presented to the stellar deity, Shou Hsing, god of longevity. The star from which this deity takes his name is identified as Canopus, the second brightest star in the heavens. When it can be seen, national peace is assured; when it is invisible, dire calamities may happen. This deity was worshipped by Shih Huang of the Ch'in dynasty in 246 B.C., according to the records of the Han dynasty. There are also records of the worship of Shou Hsing by Emperors of the T'ang and Ming dynasties. At the present time pictures of him on paper or elaborately embroid-

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ered on silk or satin are used on the occasion of birthday ceremonies. He is now represented in human form as an old man with elongated forehead and pointed head, carrying in one hand a crook and in the other a peach, and mounted on a fawn which is turning its head so that it can see the face of its rider. He is often associated with the spirits of happiness and prosperity, and the three are then known as Fu-shou-lu. He is also called the "Old Man of the Southern Pole" (Nan-chi lao-jên). Longevity is considered by the Chinese as the greatest of all human blessings.

Another domestic deity worshipped by members of the family who propose to start on a journey is the god of the road, Hsing Shên. The origin of this worship is prehistoric. The son of the fabulous Emperor Huang Ti, was named Lei. He was fond of constant travelling and finally died while on a journey. He was deified as the protector of wayfarers.

Among the Chinese there is no more notable characteristic than the desire for offspring. Pilgrimages are made to temples and prayers are made to deities whose favourable replies are assumed to be readily obtainable. The chief object of such worship is the Buddhist deity, Kuan Yin, goddess of mercy. Worship of Kuan Yin began during the period of the Six Dynasties and is now observed in all parts of the country. It was already wide-spread at the time of the foundation of the Sung dynasty in 960 A.D., but this did not prevent an attempt being made to replace this worship of a foreign goddess by that of a Chinese deity. The first Emperor of the Sung dynasty tried to elevate Chang Hsien to the position of the deity to whom prayers for offspring should be addressed, but his efforts were not rewarded with success. There are conflicting tales as to the identity of Chang Hsien. One of these states that his name was mentioned to the Emperor by the Lady Fei who had been taken from being the concubine of Mêng Ch'ang, the last ruler of the Shu state of Szechuan, to be the concubine of the first Sung Emperor.

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She had a portrait hanging at the doorway of her apartments which was presumably that of her first husband; but when questioned as to whose portrait it was, this clever woman answered that it was that of Chang Hsien, a recluse of the period of the Five Dynasties. Another account states that the por-

FIG. 21. CHANG HSIEN

trait was one of the founder of the T'ang dynasty, and that Chang Hsien was only a supposititious name given to him by this woman. In a collection of poems called *Su Lao-ch'üan Tsi*, it is said that the full name of Chang Hsien is Chang Yüan-hsiao. He was a native of Mei-shan, in Szechuan province, and retired for contemplation as a recluse to the Ch'ing Ch'êng Mountain in the Kuan district, also in Szechuan Province. The author of this poem was himself rewarded for praying to Chang Hsien by the birth of two children. This deity is reputed to

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have taken up his spiritual abode in the Chia Hsien pavilion at Chiung Chow in Szechuan Province. All the references to Chang Hsien connect him with Szechuan Province and he may be considered as a special guardian of this part of China. He is represented as a man of noble bearing carrying a cross-bow and arrows. Above his head are clouds in which are seen the sun and the heavenly dog, reputed to devour the sun at the time of eclipses. In addition to his ability to give children to suppliants, he was also able to ward off calamities. He is given the central position in the "All Children's Hall" (*Pai-tzŭ T'ang*), but worship of this deity has never been wide-spread. It is a singular example of the failure of an Emperor to supplant the worship in temples of the foreign goddess Kuan Yin by that of a purely indigenous deity who would have been worshipped in the home, and as such it deserves notice. For once Imperial patronage failed to divert the people from an earlier choice.

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CHAPTER VIII

GREAT NATIONAL HEROES

AMONG the mythical heroes of China none are more popular than those who were immortalized by Ch'ü Yüan, 332–295 B.C., in his poem "Falling into Trouble" (*Li Sao*).

FIG. 22. TA SSŬ MING

Ch'ü Yüan rose to high office in his native state of Ch'u, but was impeached on trivial grounds and expressed his disappointment in this poem. He retired to a quiet life, and finally committed suicide by jumping into a river on the

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fifth day of the fifth moon. In memory of him the people of his district offered sacrifices to him annually on this date and the custom gradually spread until it was transformed into the Fifth Moon Feast, or, as it is often called, the Dragon Festival. The most interesting part of "Falling into Trouble" is the "Nine Songs" in which eleven heroes are

FIG. 23. HSIAO SSŬ MING

celebrated. These eleven are really only nine, for Ssŭ Ming is divided into two persons, senior and junior, and under Hsiang Chün the two daughters of Yao, Hsiang Fu-jên, are treated each under a separate heading. If these four headings are combined into two as is usual in literary references, the "Nine Songs" in reality are connected with nine heroes. These were all heroes originally of the State of Ch'u, which is the modern Hupeh (and part of Hunan), but have become national by the

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FIG. 24. TUNG HUANG T'AI I

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popularity of this poem. These heroes have not only been made famous in poetry; they have also been painted by famous artists. The "Nine Songs" painted by Li Kung-lin of the Sung dynasty is in the Government Museum at Peking, and is one of "The Four Beautiful Objects" (*ssŭ mei chü*) of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung. The illustrations of these heroes are

FIG. 25. YÜN CHUNG CHÜN

taken from Li's painting. The following is a short description of each of the nine heroes:

(1) Tung Huang T'ai I was worshipped in the eastern part of Ch'u as the Eastern Emperor.

(2) Yün Chung Chün is the god of the clouds.

(3) Hsiang Chün is the god of the waterways of Hsiang (modern Hunan).

(a) Hsiang Fu-jên, the two daughters of Emperor Yao, the older being named Wo Huang and the younger Nü Ying.

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They became the Empress and Consort of the Emperor Shun. Their graves are reputed to be at Hsiang Shan, an island in the Tung-t'ing lake of Hunan. The Emperor Shih Huang of the Ch'in dynasty is said to have been driven by a strong wind on the island while attempting to cross the lake. He became very angry and ordered all the trees and shrubs on the island to

FIG. 26. HSIANG CHÜN

be destroyed, thus turning the green hillsides to a dull brown (*chê ch'i shan*).

(4) Ssŭ Ming is the arbiter of life and death, the assistant of High Heaven in controlling human events, the protector of virtue and enemy of evil. In this elegy Ssŭ Ming is divided into two beings, one senior and one junior, thus giving rise to the wrong interpretation that the two stellar deities Shang T'ai and Wên Ch'ang are referred to. The division into senior and junior arbiters is probably a poetic licence, in the same way as

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Hsiang Chün is separated from Hsiang Fu-jên in this elegy, though they are usually joined together under the one term Hsiang Chün.

(5) Tung Chün is the god of the sun rising in the East.

(6) Ho Po is god of the Yellow River, according to the statement of Chuang Tzŭ. He has the form of a man. This name seems interchangeable with that of the god of the waters,

Fig. 27. Hsiang Fu-jên

Shui Shên, of the god of the fishes, Yü Po, and of two other gods of the waters called Fêng I and Shui I. The poem under this heading in these "Nine Songs" refers to a journey made by Ho Po in company with a maiden who fell into the water and was rescued by him and taken to the "fish-scale house" (*yü lin wu*).

(7) Shan Kuei is a demon of the mountains. Giles, in his *Chinese Literature* has translated this poem, the first part of

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which describes the demon as follows: "Methinks there is a genius of the hills, clad in wistaria, girdled with ivy, with smiling lips of witching mien, riding on the red pard, wild cats galloping in the rear, reclining in a chariot, with banners of cassia, cloaked with the orchid, girt with azalea, culling the perfume of sweet flowers to leave behind a memory in the heart."

FIG. 28. TUNG CHÜN

(8) Kuo Shang, the patriot who died for his country. This patriot, according to the poem, faced a body of enemies "as thick as the dark clouds."

(9) Li Hun, the ceremonialist, is worshipped on account of his perseverance in the correct observation of ceremony even at the cost of his own life.

These nine heroes have been celebrated by many poets since the time of Ch'ü Yüan, and the poetical phrases used in de-

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scribing them have been reproduced and reconstructed in numberless poems. To literary men they are national heroes, but they have never become popular among the common people. They are all mythical characters.

In contrast to these, three historical characters must be mentioned whose lives contributed in large measure to the belief

Fig. 29. Ho Po

in mystery and magic, although there are few myths told concerning these men themselves. The first of the three is Chang Liang. At the close of the short-lived Ch'in dynasty, 209 B.C., two military leaders, Liu Pang and Hsiang Chi, contended for the mastery, and for a long time the latter was uniformly victorious. Finally the Kuang Wu terms of peace were negotiated by which the father and wife of Liu Pang were restored to him; but no sooner had they returned than Liu Pang proceeded to break the treaty and again to attack Hsiang Chi, whom he

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shortly after defeated. Liu Pang thereupon proclaimed himself Emperor of the Han dynasty which passed into history with many achievements to its credit. Out of these troublous times emerged the strange person, Chang Liang. He came first into prominence by his attempt to assassinate Shih Huang, the great Ch'in Emperor, at Po Lang Sha, which is Yang-wu Hsien in Honan Province. After this futile attempt he retired

FIG. 30. SHAN KUEI

to a hiding place in Kiang-su Province. He joined the service of Liu Pang and it was on his advice that the Kuang Wu peace-terms were broken. When Liu Pang became Emperor he raised Chang Liang to the rank of Marquis, declaring that his success had been mainly due to the wise counsels that had been given by Chang. The Emperor further honoured Chang by making him one of the "Three Heroes" (San Chieh). After these honours had been conferred upon him, Chang renounced

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the world "to follow the example of Ch'ih Sung Tzŭ" who, according to the *Lieh Hsien Chuan*, was the arbiter of rain in the period of the legendary Shên Nung. He devoted himself to a study of the doctrines of Huang Ti and Lao Tzŭ, abstained from food and sought for immortality. It was chiefly due to his example that his descendant of the eighth generation, Chang Tao-ling, devoted himself to the mysteries of alchemy.

Fig. 31. Kuo Shang

Out of the stirring events at the close of the Han dynasty, as a result of which the country was divided into the Three Kingdoms (San Kuo) of Shu, Wei and Wu, emerges Kuan Yü who later became the god of war. These events are described with further details in Chapter XIV. Kuan Yü was the sworn brother of Liu Pei and followed him during his turbulent career. He was given charge of Hsia-p'i (the modern Hsü

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Chow, in Kiangsi Province) but during the defeat which Liu Pei suffered at the hands of Ts'ao Ts'ao, he was captured. Ts'ao Ts'ao treated Kuan Yü with great consideration. This kindly treatment led Kuan Yü to assist Ts'ao Ts'ao when the latter was attacked by Yüan Shao, and with his own hands he slew Yen Liang who was one of Yüan Shao's generals. After this exhibition of his gratitude he sent a respectful letter to Ts'ao Ts'ao resigning his position and again joined the standard of his sworn brother, Liu Pei. He assisted Liu Pei in his campaigns in Central China, and was appointed to the charge of Hsiang Yang and Ching Chow in modern Hupeh Province, where he acquired a great reputation for the benevolence of his rule. In the attack made by Sun Ch'üan, founder of the Kingdom of Wu, Kuan Yü was slain. The Emperor Hui Tsung, 1100–1126 A.D., of the Sung dynasty, ennobled Kuan Yü as the Duke of Ch'ung Hui, and his successor, Ch'in Tsung, raised him to the rank of a Prince during the days when the Sungs were fleeing from K'ai-fêng to Hang-chow. The Emperor Wan Li, 1572–1620 A.D., of the Ming dynasty, deified Kuan Yü, conferring upon him the title of "the patriotic assistant of Heaven and protector of his country" (Hsieh t'ien hu kuo chung i ta ti). During the reign of Ch'ien Lung, 1736–1796 A.D., of the Manchu dynasty, this title was abbreviated, but Kuan Yü was further honoured by being made the protector of the dynasty. In 1914 the Republic ordered that sacrifices should be offered to him in military temples along with Yo Fei.

FIG. 32. KUAN YÜ, GOD OF WAR

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During the troublous times that befell the Emperor Hsüan Tsung, 713–756 A.D., of the T'ang dynasty, one of the greatest of China's long list of eminent generals, Kuo Tzŭ-i, came into prominence. The corruption of the court which centred around the Empress Yang Kuei-fei resulted in the rebellion of An Lu-shan who for a time established himself as the Emperor Hsiung Wu of the Yen dynasty (in the modern Chihli Province). Through brilliant campaigns against the rebel, Kuo Tzŭ-i succeeded in recovering all the territory which had been lost. He fought against the Targuts and the Turfans. For more than twenty years the supreme military power was in his hands and he exercised it with entire loyalty to the dissolute Emperor. He used no favouritism in the selection of his subordinates, and did not allow his troops to molest the people. The Emperor gave his daughter in marriage to his son. He served during the reigns of these Emperors of the T'ang dynasty, by each of whom he was equally honoured and trusted. He died in 781 A.D. at the age of eighty-five. He is said to have been more than seven feet in height and to have had, therefore, a commanding presence. He was ennobled as the Prince of Fên-yang in 763 by the Emperor Tai Tsung and was given the title of "Imperial Father" (Shang Fu) by the Emperor Tê Tsung. His posthumous title was "Patriotic Militarist" (Chung Wu). In modern times he is worshipped in many places as the god of riches. According to the *Shên Hsien T'ung Chien* the origin of this worship was in a visit paid to

FIG. 33. KUO TZŬ-I

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Kuo Tzŭi by "The Weaving Damsel" (Chih Nü), who appeared to him as he was about to retire on the night of the seventh day of the seventh moon and said: "You are the god of riches and of longevity. All kinds of riches and honours attend you."

Another great patriot was Yo Fei, 1103–1141 A.D. He rose at the time when the Sung Emperors were being harassed on the northern boundaries by the Nü-chên Tartars. The Tartars became so powerful that finally the Sungs were obliged to conclude with them a humiliating peace, by the terms of which the northern Provinces were ceded to them and they established the Chin dynasty which reigned 1115–1234 A.D. Yo Fei was a faithful and loyal officer of the Sungs and finally lost his life on their behalf, being imprisoned and murdered by the treacherous Ch'in Kuei. After death he was ennobled as a Prince and his tomb on the banks of the Western Lake at Hangchow is held in high honour. Since 1914 his name has been linked with that of Kuan Yü in military temples, and sacrifices are offered to his memory throughout the whole country.

These are only a few of the great heroes of China. Others of equal interest historically might have been chosen, but those that have been mentioned have been selected on account of their prominence either in literature or popular tradition.

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CHAPTER IX

THE ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE WORLDS

ACCORDING to the *Li Ki* there are four benevolent or spiritual animals (*ssŭ ling*). There are the unicorn (*ch'i-lin*), the phoenix (*fêng-huang*), the tortoise (*kuei*), and the dragon (*lung*). The unicorn is at the head of all quadrupeds, the phoenix of all birds, the tortoise of all molluscs, and the dragon of all scaly animals. There are other animals which enter into the myths of China, such as the crane, the fox, the tiger, but these four spiritual ones are of greatest importance.

The unicorn is said to have the body of a deer, the tail of an ox, and the hoofs of a horse. It has one soft horn growing out of the centre of the head. It is five-coloured on its back and yellow on its belly. It eats no living vegetation and never walks on green grass. It has a good disposition toward other animals. It is said to appear at the birth of good sovereigns or of sages. Any injury inflicted upon it is a presage of coming disasters. Its earliest appearance was in the garden of the Yellow Emperor, 2697 B.C. Later two unicorns took up their abode in P'ing-yang, the capital city of the Emperor Yao. Still later one appeared to the mother of Confucius before his birth, whereupon she vomited up a jade tablet on which was an inscription in praise of the future sage. Just before the death of Confucius a charioteer injured a unicorn, thus foretelling the imminence of his death. The male is called *ch'i* and the female, *lin*, the combination of the two characters being used as a generic term.

The phoenix is a mysterious but most beautiful bird. Its plumage is a blending of the five colours, and its call is a sweet

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harmony of the five notes. It had its origin in the sun and represents the active principle, Yang, or nature; or according to another account it was created in the land of the sages. It bathes only in the purest of water which flows from the K'un-lun Mountains, and it passes the night in the cave of Tan. It can raise its beautiful tail to the height of six feet. Wherever

FIG. 34. THE PHOENIX

it goes all the other three hundred and sixty varieties of birds assemble to pay it homage. Like the unicorn it is said to have appeared at the time of Huang Ti, and also during the reign of the Emperors Shao Hao and Yao, 2597–2514 B.C. Its appearance is an omen of prosperity, and when it goes away the country is visited with calamities. There are many accounts of its appearance to fortunate monarchs, the last of these being at the grave of the father of Hung Wu, founder of the Ming dy-

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nasty, 1368–99 A.D., at Fêng-yang in the Province of Anhui. It was considered a favourable sign for this monarch that the name of his birthplace contained the character *fêng*, one of the two characters which make the name of the phoenix.

The tortoise was associated with divination from the dawn of Chinese history. Its carapace was heated in a strong fire and from the resultant lines or crackles the fates were foretold. This custom was already in vogue in the time of the Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti. The Great Emperor Yü (Ta Yü) saw a tortoise come up out of the Lo River and on its carapace were prophetic ideographs, as already narrated. There are frequent references to the tortoise in the "Book of Rites" (*Li Ki*) and other classical writings. It has been honoured continuously from antiquity down to our present times. Doré mentions an Imperial Edict issued to the late Li Hung-chang, ordering him to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the tortoise for its protection of the dykes of the Yellow River. In ancient times a large tortoise (*yüan kuei*) was considered a symbol of the control of the Empire in the same manner as the ownership of the Nine Tripods. It has been joined in literature with the crane as an emblem of longevity. It has also had another symbolic meaning, i.e. of the victory of right. In the Kuei Shê painting there is a death struggle between a tortoise and a snake in which the tortoise is victor. In this painting the tortoise is the symbol of the power of righteousness, and the snake of the power of evil. On account of its propitious nature it is used as a pedestal (*kuei-fu*) on which tablets are placed. The earliest tablet of this sort of which there is a record known to me, was created during the reign of Ch'un Hua, 990–995 A.D., of the Sung dynasty, and on it were inscribed passages from the "Classic of Filial Piety" (*Hsiao King*). Marvellous powers are ascribed to the tortoise. In the "Water Classic" (*Shui King*), it is said that when the tortoise is a thousand years old it can converse with men. In another book it is narrated that during the life of Sun Ch'üan,

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181–252 A.D., who became the first Emperor of the Wu dynasty there was a man living at Yung K'ang in the prefecture of Chin-hua, in Chehkiang Province, who caught a large tortoise during his wanderings over the hills. As he was carrying it home he was overtaken by darkness and sought refuge in a boat which was tied to a mulberry tree on the bank of a canal. He was startled during the night by hearing the tree speak to the tortoise and say: "Tortoise, you must surely die!" To this the tortoise replied: "This is on account of my having gone out on an unlucky day." The tortoise also uttered prophecies concerning the destiny of the newly-founded Wu dynasty, which were afterwards found to be correct. The name of the tortoise is taken in vain when it is used as a term of vilification. No worse term of abuse can be employed than to call another man a tortoise. The generally accepted explanation of this use of the term is that the outcast class (*lo hu*), who had no legal status, was obliged during the T'ang dynasty to wear a strip of green cloth tied around the head. The degenerate males of this outcast class lived from the earnings of the prostitution of their wives and daughters. This was the very lowest depth of immorality. As the head of the tortoise is green, it became a symbol of the green-headed outcasts; and to call a person a tortoise originally meant to put him in the vilest class of human beings, and also to name him as a bastard. This abuse of a word which generally has an honourable meaning is similar to the use in Western countries of the name of the Deity in swearing. In the account of the rites of divination there is a further discussion of the tortoise.

The last of the four spiritual animals is the dragon, though from the viewpoint of antiquity of origin it should be first in this class. It was a dragon-horse which brought the Eight Diagrams to Fu Hsi in 2852 B.C., and a pair of dragons were seen in the river by the Yellow Emperor. Dragons appeared at opportune times when prosperity was foretold. The dragon

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can render itself visible or invisible at pleasure, and it can also change its appearance in colour and in size. In the spring it mounts to the heavens, and in the autumn it seeks refuge in the water. It is the sign and symbol of Imperial authority. During the late Manchu dynasty it was held in especial honour, and the five-clawed dragon was adopted as a royal patent. Everything used by the Emperor was described in terms of a dragon

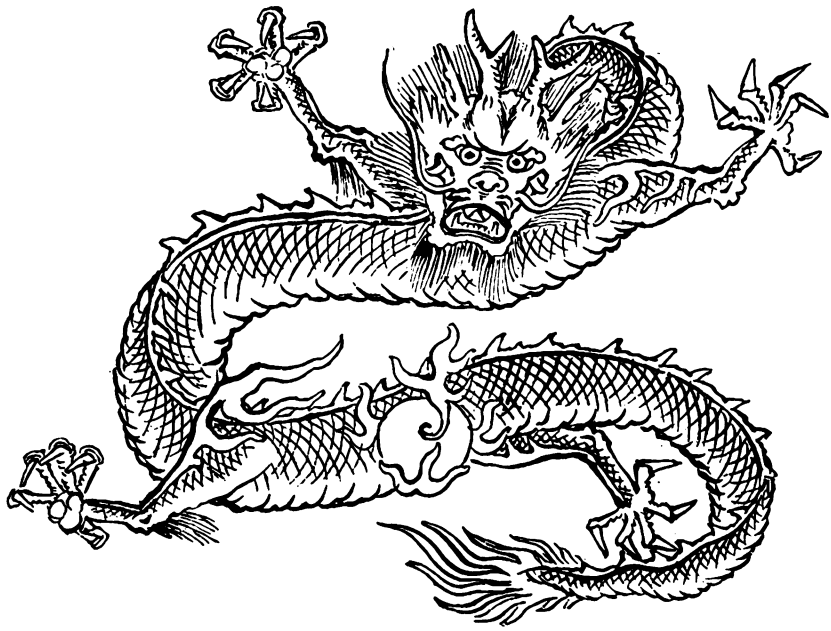

Fig. 35. The Dragon, Lung

— dragon-throne, dragon-clothes, dragon-bed, dragon-boat. The descriptions and pictorial representations of the dragon vary in details. When Mr. Hatch was hunting for a design for the coins to be issued by the national mints, he found nearly one hundred different patterns of the dragon. There are, however, certain characteristics common to all — a bearded head with horns, a scaly body, and claws on the feet. The dragon controls the clouds and rain. It appears in the black clouds

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which precede a thunder storm, and from the different shapes which these clouds assume have arisen the various forms of the dragon. A large horse or a very fast one is called a dragon or sometimes a dragon-in-flight (*lung fei*). This term is in frequent use on the signboards of livery stables, and, in recent years, of public garages. The dragon is always, in short, an omen of good fortune.

In addition to these four animals, there are others which have a large place in early myths. The tiger (*hu*), was

Fig. 36. The Fox

mounted by Chang Tao-ling when he ascended to Heaven, according to some accounts; others represent him as mounting a dragon. Lao Tzŭ made his ascent on a cow. The tiger is often painted on portals where it acts as guardian. It is reputed to live to a great old age. The fox (*hu li*), is the symbol of cunning, and associates with fairies. The monkey (*hou*), has control of witches and hobgoblins. The rabbit (*t'u*), is said to live in the moon where it pounds out the drugs from which the elixir of life is made. The *Shan Hai King* mentions many curious animals, such as the heavenly dog (*t'ien kou*), which has a white head and the general appearance of a fox; also

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a water-horse (*shui ma*), with striped back and the tail of an ox. There are four other animals with names which have sounds similar to the symbolic meaning with which they are connected. An example of this imitative use of words is the word for lion which is *shih*. As this is also the sound of the word which means teacher, a lion is the suggestive symbol for a teacher. The sound of the character which means deer is *lu;* it also is that of the character meaning promotion, and thus a deer symbolizes promotion. The word for a bat, *fu,* has the same sound as the word for happiness; an eagle, *yin,* as that for the answer to prayer; and each suggests its appropriate meaning when used pictorially. The crane, *hsien ho,* is a symbol of longevity, and the rooster a guardian against evil influences. Tsêng Ts'an, a disciple of Confucius, spared the life of a wounded crane which flew away and later returned with its mate, each of them carrying in its mouth a pearl. These were presented to Tsêng Ts'an as a reward for his kindness. Though there are few ancient myths connected with any of these inferior animals which are spoken of in this paragraph, they appear in the fairy-tales which are narrated later in this volume, and it is well to be familiar with their symbolic meaning. They are the creations chiefly of the scholars of the T'ang and Sung dynasties, who used the marvellous tales connected with these animals as a means of impressing the common people with the extraordinary quality of the Taoist doctrine, in the same way as the Buddhist propagandists gained a hearing through accounts of the miraculous powers of their deities.

In the vegetable kingdom several trees are especially honoured on account of their supposed magical influence. The peach-tree is a symbol of longevity. It is said that one of these trees (*p'an t'ao*) grew near the palace of Hsi Wang Mu and that its fruit ripened only once in three thousand years. This fairy mother bestowed the fruit upon the mortals whom

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she favoured, such as Mu Wang and Wu Ti. Mingled with ashes of the mulberry-tree it could cure disease and confer immortality. According to the *Fêng Su T'ung*, in ancient times the two brothers Shu Yü (or Shên Shu) and Yü Lei had great power over evil spirits. They hung an amulet on a peach-tree which would frighten all demons. They could also bind evil spirits with reeds and throw them to tigers for food. It is in memory of these two men, who are called "peach men" (T'ao Jên), that reed grass is hung over the door at New Year time and a tiger painted on the door in order to ward off evil influences. The *prunus* or plum-tree (*mei*), is also an emblem of longevity. Lao Tzŭ is said to have been born under a plum-tree. Both the pine (*sung*) and the bamboo (*chu*) are emblems of longevity. The willow is reputed, like reed grass, to be able to ward off evil influences, and is also hung over the door for this purpose. Several shrubs and plants are also used as symbols. The pomegranate (*shih liu*), and the lotus (*lien hua*), on account of the large number of seeds which their fruit contains, are symbolic of offspring, as is also the date-tree, which is used on account of its name, *tsao tzŭ*. The two characters for date have the same sound as two other characters with the meaning of "bringing offspring into the world." The symbolic meaning attached to these trees and shrubs has been given to them since the rise of Taoism as an organized religion in the T'ang dynasty, and although they are now commonly used with the symbolic meanings just mentioned, there are no ancient myths attached to them. Their symbolism is of comparatively modern origin.

According to the *Pên Ts'ao Kang Mu* there are many hundreds of medicinal herbs in China, and from their ability to use them for curative purposes, several characters famous in Chinese lore have arisen. The most popular of these is Yo Wang, the god of medicines. One of the accounts of his life says that he was a hermit who lived during the reign of Hsüan Ti,

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827–781 B.C., and that he was a pupil of Ch'iu Chên-jên. He continually wandered about, and one of his most famous encounters was that with Sun Ssŭ-miao who died in 682 A.D. Sun was a native of Shensi and was a precocious child who studied the doctrines of Lao Tzŭ while still very young. One day Sun saw a shepherd who was beating a serpent. He took off his own clothes and gave them to the shepherd as a price for allowing it to go free. A few days later, while he was wandering in the fields, he saw a horseman dressed in white approaching him. The man dismounted and saluted Sun saying: "My father has ordered me to come to you with the request that you will visit him and receive his thanks." He asked Sun to mount his horse, and soon they were in a wonderful city at the gate of a palace. When Sun entered he was met by a nobleman who greeted him with profuse thanks. Shortly after a young woman brought in a child dressed in blue, and said to Sun: "This child of mine went out to play and a shepherd beat him frightfully. You gave your garments as a price for his liberty, and I desire to thank you." This child was the serpent whom Sun had saved a few days before. Sun found that his host was Ching Yang and that the beautiful house was the "Palace of Waters" (Shui Kung). After this incident Sun returned to his quiet house in the mountains where he spent his time in preparing elixirs of immortality and performing miracles. One concoction would give immunity from pestilence if drunk on New Year's Day. Sun is the reputed author of several books on medical subjects. There is another account of the origin of Yo Wang. When Han Ch'i, 1008–1075 A.D., the great statesman who opposed the agrarian theories of Wang An-shih, was six or seven years of age he was very ill. He suddenly cried out: "There is a Taoist leading a dog who will cure me." Thereupon he broke out in a violent perspiration and was cured. According to the *Lieh Hsien Chuan*, the person who cured him was Chang

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Shan-chün, a native of Peking during the reign of the Empress Wu Hou of the T'ang dynasty, 684–705 A.D. He practised the Taoist magical arts and always led around a black dog which was called "Black Dragon" (Wu-lung). According to this account it is Chang who is popularly spoken of as "King

FIG. 37. HUA T'O, THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

of Medicines" (Yo Wang). The person who is generally credited with having become Yo Wang is Hua T'o, who died in 220 A.D., the physician of Ts'ao Ts'ao. During his life-time he was able to perform many wonderful cures for internal diseases and also many surgical operations. His supernatural power is now besought by worshippers at his shrine.

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CHAPTER X

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

THERE are three grades of supernatural beings. The highest is composed of "The Holy" (Shêng). These are men of extraordinary ability and perfect virtue. The second rank is that of "The Perfect" (Chên Jên). These are persons who have perfected their knowledge of the Way, or Tao. Their bodies are ethereal, and they are able to fly through the air on the wings of the wind. They pass on the clouds from one world to another and live in the stars. They are superior to all natural laws and are rulers over the Immortals. The third class is "The Immortals" (Hsien, or Hsien Jên). These are the ascetics with old bodies and eternally young spirits. They enjoy perfect health, free from disease and death, and are fortunate possessors of all kinds of happiness. It is probable that these three grades of supernatural beings are taken from the earlier classical allusion to the three grades of the "Worthy, the Holy and the Heavenly" (Hsien, Shêng, T'ien).

FIG. 38. THE TAOIST TRINITY
T'IEN PAO, LING PAO, SHÊN PAO

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At the head of the Holy beings are "The Three Purities" (San Ch'ing) who compose the Taoist Trinity. This Trinity is not an imitation of the Buddhist Trinity, but was probably also taken from classical tradition. The *Tso Chuan* refers to "The Three Venerable Ones" (San Lao, i.e. Kung Lao, Shang Lao, Lung Lao). The *Li Ki* mentions "The Three Officials"

FIG. 39. YÜAN SHIH T'IEN TSUN

(San Kuan); the *Shu King* speaks of "The Three Notables" (San Kung, i.e. T'ai-shih, T'ai-fu, T'ai-pao); and there was also the tradition of "The Three Emperors" (San Huang). "The Three Purities" are also frequently interpreted as "The Three Heavens," viz., Yü ("jade"), Shang ("superior"), and T'ai ("highest"). In the Taoist pantheon the "Three Purities" are (1) Yüan Shih T'ien Tsun, the "Eternal," popularly known as T'ien Pao, (2) Tao Chün, chief of all supernatural beings, who is popularly known as Ling Pao, and (3)

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Lao Tzŭ, who in this connection is popularly spoken of as Shên Pao. The first of these is sovereign of the "Jade Heaven" (Yü Ch'ing) the second is sovereign of the "Superior Heaven" (Shang Ch'ing), and the third is sovereign of the "Highest Heaven" (T'ai Ch'ing). In enumerations of this Taoist Trinity the place of the first Divinity, Yüan Shih,

Fig. 40. Tao Chün

is frequently taken by the Jade Emperor, Yü Huang. With the San Ch'ing are associated "The Four Guardians" (Ssŭ Wei), otherwise known as "The Four Heavenly Kings" (Ssŭ T'ien Wang). Though this Trinity of "Three Purities" was an invention of the scholars of the T'ang dynasty, it was not until the Yüan dynasty that the myth assumed its present form.

According to the *Shên Hsien T'ung Chien*, the first of the Trinity, Yüan Shih, was a son of the "Great Creator" (P'an Ku). After the work of creation was completed, P'an Ku de-

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sired to see what he had done. His spirit transported itself on the wings of the wind to Fu Yü Tai where he met "The Holy Woman" (T'ai Yüan), "The Great Original." She was a virgin who had attained the age of eighty years and lived as a recluse on the mountain of Ch'o Wo. She subsisted solely on air and clouds, and in her own person combined both the active and passive powers of nature. P'an Ku was charmed with her purity and made an occasion to enter her body in the form of a pure ray of light. The woman became pregnant and remained in this condition for twelve years, when she gave birth to Yüan Shih, who was able to walk and talk from the time he was born. A cloud of five colours surrounded his body. The deity Chên Wu is a reincarnation of Yüan Shih. He is the ruler of the abode of darkness, and his full title is Hsüan T'ien Shang Ti. He is also called "god of the North Pole" (Pei-chi Chên Chün). While he does not take the place of Yüan Shih in the Trinity, he is given a shrine to himself in large Taoist temples. The second person of the Trinity is said to have been a man who fought for the tyrant Chou Hsin, the last sovereign of the Shang dynasty. He is represented as wearing a red garment richly brocaded, and riding a one-horned monster, *k'uei niu*. It is recorded in

FIG. 41. CHÊN WU

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the *Fêng Shên Yen I* that he was succoured by Lao Tzŭ in his unsuccessful warfare, and that he devoted the rest of his life to study and meditation. The third person of the Trinity is the philosopher Lao Tzŭ, whose ethical teachings are entirely overlooked in the accounts of supernatural powers which were conferred upon him by the last Emperors of the Sung dynasty, as well as by all the Emperors of the Yüan dynasty. Among these tales of Lao Tzŭ the most popular is that of his journey to the west mounted on a white donkey.

FIG. 42. WÊN CH'ANG, GOD OF LITERATURE

In a class by himself, inferior to the Trinity but with great prestige, is Wên Ch'ang, the god of literature, who is supposed to reside in the Great Bear constellation. There are many differing accounts of his earthly life, but the most usually accepted is that he was one Chang Ya-tzŭ who lived during the Chin dynasty in the third or fourth century A.D. The Emperor Hsüan Tsung, 713–756 A.D., conferred upon him the retrospective title of President of the Board of Rites. During the reign of Chên Tsung, 997–1022 A.D., of the Sung dynasty, Wên Ch'ang appeared to the general Lei Yu-chung, who had been appointed to suppress a rebellion, and called himself the " Deity of Tzŭ-t'ung " (Tzŭ-t'ung Shên). This name was taken from the tradition that Chang Ya-tzŭ lived in the Tzŭ-t'ung district of the Province of Szechuan. During the Yüan

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and Ming dynasties the place of Wên Ch'ang as the god of literature became solidly established. He has a separate shrine in large Taoist temples, and in many places separate temples are built in his honour. In front of his image is a black horse, saddled and bridled, attended by two servants who are called T'ien-lung ("the celestial deaf one"), and Ti-ya ("the earthly mute"). The explanation of the names of these two attendants is that there are great secrets in literature which no one can penetrate even if he be gifted with the greatest intelligence. In its deepest meanings literature is deaf to appeals for explanation and is dumb in its attempts to make men understand.

The term "Perfect Ones" (Chên Jên) is taken from the philosopher Chuang Tzŭ (third century B.C.), who speaks of Kuan Yin and Lao Tan as "Very Great Perfect Beings" (Po Ta Chên Jên). The same philosopher gives a definition of the word "perfect" (*chên*) as meaning "thoroughly sincere," (*ching ch'ên chih chih*). During the flourishing periods of Taoism several individuals have come to the high state of perfection. The most notable of these "Perfect Ones" are Sun, whose birthday is celebrated on the third day of the first moon; Liu, born on the first day of the second moon; Tu, who ascended to Heaven on the twenty-sixth day of the third moon; the twins Lang, whose birthday was the twenty-sixth day of the sixth moon, and Hsü Hsün, 240–374 A.D., of whom the following incidents are related. He was appointed magistrate of Hsüan-yang in Szechuan Province, but did not retain his office for any length of time. He preferred to resume his studies of occult subjects to which he had devoted his youth. Returning to his home at Hung-chow (modern Nanch'ang) in Kiangsi Province, he retired to the mountains. Here he perfected himself in the occult arts as taught by Wu Mêng, by means of which he was able to do much good to the people of the neighbourhood. He slew dragons and caused water to gush from a rock. At the

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age of one hundred and thirty-four, he gathered his family of forty-two souls together and with them all was translated to Heaven. He is known as Hsü Chên-jên.

"The Immortals" (Hsien) are the most interesting of the three classes of spiritual beings. Two different Chinese characters are used for the word "Hsien," one with the meaning of "a mountain-man" and the other with the meaning of "a frolicking capering being." These Immortals or Fairies are primarily persons who retire to the mountains for study and meditation. The ideograph Hsien, meaning "mountain-man," is not found in any books written previous to the Han dynasty, and it is probable that it was invented during the reign of the Emperor Shih Huang of the Ch'in dynasty who was a devoted patron of the magical arts. The Immortals have the appearance of human beings and wear ordinary clothes. They live to a good old age, and when they die their material body is scattered and the soul rises into the immortal ether. Other accounts of them say that their bodies never grow old, and that after a thousand years they have still the appearance of youth. They have fixed abodes in the known universe, but are able to move about from place to place at pleasure.

There are two official abodes of the Fairies. The one for male Fairies is called Tung-hua. This is under the control of Tung Wang. His disciples are called "Gentlemen of the Wood" (Mu Kung). The fairyland for females is Hsi-hua, and it is under the control of Hsi Wang Mu. Other places of residence are spoken of as the "Nine Palaces" (Chiu Kung), or as the "Mountains of the Immortals," (Hsien Shan), or as the "Territory of the Immortals," (Hsien Ching), where everything is obscure and quiet, and where there is no disturbance by the surrounding earth or air, or as Tung Fu. Another abode is stated to be Chiu I, a mountain which, according to the "Water Classic," has nine peaks, the second of which is Hsien T'an, "The Altar of the Fairies." The most

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delightful abode of the Immortals is, however, "The Three Isles of the Blest" (San Hsien Shan). These three "Island Mountains" are P'êng-lai, Fang-chang and Ying-chou. These islands were supposed to be in the Eastern Sea, and it was to them that the Emperor Shih Huang of the Ch'in dynasty, on the advice of An-ch'i, sent a sea-expedition to secure

FIG. 43. TUNG WANG KUNG AND HSI WANG MU

from them the plant of immortality. The expedition was led by Hsü Shih and Lu Shêng. It is said that the Emperor sent in his ships three thousand youths and maidens, together with all manner of seed grain and skilful artisans. The ships were all lost in a fierce storm. These Isles are frequently spoken of as part of the "Happy Land" (Fu-ti). The "Huai-nan Wang" song tells of the abode of the King of Huai-nan in these Isles of the Blest, where he lived as a

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companion of the Eight Immortals. This is a ballad of great popularity.

There are two rulers among the Immortals. The first of these is the Fairy Queen, Hsi Wang Mu, who reigns over all female genii, and with her is associated Tung Wang Kung, who is the ruler of all male genii. Tung Wang Kung was invented as a Prince-consort for the Fairy Queen. He is known also as Mu Kung. His heavenly palace has the blue clouds for its walls. There is very little popular interest in this Immortal, and he is almost entirely eclipsed by his associate Hsi Wang Mu, who is the most fascinating personage in Chinese mythology. She is mentioned in history as connected with the visit of Mu Wang. The visits of Mu Wang, or as he is generally called, King Mu, fifth sovereign of the Chow dynasty, who died in 946 B.C., to various places north-west of ancient China, are recorded in the "Life of King Mu" (*Mu T'ien Tzŭ Chuan*). On his journeys his chariot was drawn by eight wonderful horses. According to the "Bamboo Books" his journey was completed in one year, but his "Life" states that it occupied several years. The most noted of his visits was that to Hsi Wang Mu in the K'un-lun Mountain. Hsi Wang Mu may have been originally the local name of a place for which three simple Chinese ideographs were used to represent the sound, and the name of the locality may have been likewise the name of its chieftain. There is nothing in the "Life" to indicate the sex of this individual, but as the third of the characters, Mu, used in the transliteration of the name Hsi Wang Mu, has the meaning of "Mother," it was seized upon by later writers as the name of a woman, and she has come to be the Fairy Mother around whom countless tales are centred. The "Life" records that when King Mu visited Hsi Wang Mu, he carried in his hands the jade disks which were the emblem of his high office, and that he gave valuable presents, which were obediently accepted. He also gave a banquet to Hsi

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Wang Mu at Yao Ch'ih or "Lake of Gems," as the two ideographs mean which were selected as the transliteration of the name of this place. Honorific stanzas were composed by host and guest on this occasion. After King Mu had gone, Hsi Wang Mu wrote another poem professing allegiance to him and hoping for his speedy return. This "Life" was probably written during the time of the Warring States in the second or third century A.D. and is an enlargement of the reference by Lieh Tzŭ to the ceremonial visit of King Mu to Hsi Wang Mu in a chariot drawn by eight horses. After the rise of Taoism as a religion in the T'ang dynasty, Hsi Wang Mu was selected as one of its leading personages and the original tale as given in the "Life" was expanded to large proportions.

The "Record of the Ten Departments" (*Shih Chou Chi*) narrates that in the Eastern Sea there was a hill called Tu Su. On this hill was a large orchard several hundred miles in extent, where the flat peach (*p'an t'ao*), was grown. During the Han dynasty Tung Chün sacrificed to the pigmies and called Tung-fang So to attend. The pigmies resented this appeal to Tung-fang and said: "Hsi Wang Mu cultivates peach-trees which bear fruit only once in three thousand years. The youth whom you have called to attend cannot be compared in ability to this." It is narrated that Hsi Wang Mu gave four peaches to Wu Ti of the Han dynasty. These peaches had a particularly sweet flavour. After receiving them the Emperor wished to plant the seeds, but the Fairy Mother replied that these peach-trees only bore once in three thousand years and that the soil of China was not fertile enough to grow them. It is also narrated that during the reign of Hung Wu, first Emperor of the Ming dynasty, a peach stone was found in the treasure house of the former Yüan dynasty, which was five inches in length and more than four inches wide. On this peach stone were engraved ten ideographs which stated that this stone had been given to the Emperor Wu Ti of the Han

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dynasty by Hsi Wang Mu. At the present time large flat peaches, which are also called *p'an t'ao*, are grown in Chehkiang Province. They have a delicious flavour. It was customary during the last Manchu dynasty to send baskets of these every season to the Peking Palace.

FIG. 44. FOUR OF THE EIGHT IMMORTALS
LAN TS'AI-HO, LI T'IEH-KUAI, LÜ TUNG-PIN, CHUNG-LI CH'ÜAN

Among the Immortals the most famous is the group known as the Eight Immortals. The Chinese name for these is Pa Hsien. The number of them, eight, is probably copied from the eight officers of state during the reign of Wu Ti of the Chin dynasty, 265–290 A.D., who were known as the "Eight Gentlemen" (Pa Kung). According to the *Hsiao Hsüeh* ("Instruction of Youth"), written by Chu Hsi in the eleventh century A.D., there were also during the Sung dynasty eight

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gentlemen who were known as Pa Kung on account of their scholarship. As the Eight Immortals are not mentioned in Chinese books before the Yüan dynasty, it is probable that the term was chosen after the model either of these eight officers of state or of these eight scholars.

There are several differing lists of the Eight Immortals, but the most commonly accepted one is that which is here followed:

Fig. 45. Li T'ieh-kuai

(1) Li T'ieh-kuai was originally a man of good stature and fine appearance. From early youth he devoted himself to an ascetic life, living in the mountains for more than forty years. He sat on a reed mat and often forgot to eat or sleep. Being of the same surname, Li, as Lao Tzŭ, he besought the Great Master to descend to earth in order to teach him the mysteries of life. From time to time Lao Tzŭ appeared to Li and

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taught him the vanity of all earthly things. Sometimes Lao Tzŭ also summoned Li to interviews in his heavenly abode. It was when Li was on one of these trips with Lao Tzŭ to the countries of Hsi-yü that he left his material body in charge of his disciple, Lang Ling, with instructions to cremate it if he did not return within seven days. On the sixth day the disciple

Fig. 46. Chung-li Ch'üan

was called home to visit his sick mother and decided to cremate Li's perishable physical body. According to his original plan Li returned on the seventh day from his celestial journey, only to find that his body had been cremated and that he had no abode. On looking around he found the body of a lame beggar who had just died, and Li took this for his own double or astral body. He procured an iron staff, *t'ieh-kuai*, to support the deformed body which he had adopted as his own, and

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from this obtained the name of Li T'ieh-kuai, i.e. "Li of the iron staff." He is accredited with many benevolent deeds, such as bringing to life the body of the mother of the disciple who cremated his original body. In the form of an old man he sold drugs in the market place which could cure any kind of disease, and while there he hung a gourd on the wall of the

Fig. 47. Lü Tung-pin

house. Into this gourd he retired at night, going out the following day to attend to his sales. He preferred to associate with the poor and needy, thus acquiring a reputation for benevolence. The characteristic of this Immortal is the ill-shaped body of a beggar, who carries an iron staff in his hand, and a gourd on his back.

(2) Chung-li Ch'üan is frequently placed as the first of the Eight Immortals, but this premier position is changed by one

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of the legends concerning him which states that his conversion to an ascetic life was due to the influence of Li T'ieh-kuai, but it is of minor importance which one of these Immortals is placed first on the list. Chung-li is reputed to have lived in the Han dynasty, and for this reason is frequently spoken of as Han Chung-li, i.e. Chung-li of the Han dynasty. Another legend

FIG. 48. LÜ TUNG-PIN, CHUNG-LI CH'ÜAN

says that he was a military official in the service of the Duke Hsiao of the Chow dynasty. Doré gives five different accounts of his origin as narrated in books, but as all of them are recognized to be fictitious it matters little which account is followed. All the versions of his life agree that he was one of the searchers for immortality, and that he was a mountain recluse. His characteristics are a bearded face, a fan to which is attached a tassel of horse hair which he carries in one hand, and usually,

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though not always, the peach of immortality in his other hand.

(3) Lü Tung-pin, also known as Lü Yen and Lü Tsu, is said to have sprung from a good family and to have passed the official examinations in the highest rank. One account states that he became the magistrate of Tê-hua, which is the present city of Kiu-kiang in Kiangsi. Later he became a recluse on the Stork Peak (Ho-ling) of the Lü Mountains near the present site of Kuling. It was here that he discoursed on the five grades of genii and the three categories of merits. Here also he met the fire-dragon who gave him a magic sword with which he was able to perform many miracles. One account says that he made a journey to Yo-yang as a seller of oil in the hope of making converts to his doctrine. During the year which he spent on this trip he tried to find someone who would be sufficiently unselfish not to demand more than the amount of oil which the price warranted. Finally he found one old woman who did not ask for more than her due. He was so pleased that he went to her house and threw rice into a well, thus turning the water into wine, the sale of which made the old woman wealthy. His characteristics are the magic sword, *chan yao kuai*, which he carries on his back, and a fly-switch of horse-hair which he carries in his hand.

(4) Lan Ts'ai-ho is always represented as a youth bearing a basket of fruits and playing a flute. There has been much dispute as to the sex of this personage, some stating that Lan was a female. In Chinese theatrical performances Lan wears the clothes of a woman and talks with the voice of a man. Lan was fond of singing ballads, and some of these are recorded in the *Sou Shên Chi*. The best known is the one beginning "Ta ta ko, Lan Ts'ai-ho," and ending with comments upon the transitory life of mortals. The characteristic of Lan is a flute held to the lips and played upon by both hands.

These four Immortals are frequently portrayed sitting to-

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gether under a pine-tree. Chung-li Ch'üan and Lü Tung-pin are drinking the wine which Li T'ieh-kuai is heating for them on a brazier, while Lan Ts'ai-ho plays for their amusement upon a flute.

(5) Chang Kuo, who is also known as Chang Kuo-lao, is reputed to have been a recluse on the Chung T'iao Mountain in

Fig. 49. Lan Ts'ai-ho

Shansi Province and to have passed back and forth continually between Fên-chow and Chin-chow in the same Province. He himself professed to have been born during the reign of the Emperor Yao. One account of his life says that he was sent for by the two Emperors of the T'ang dynasty, T'ai Tsung and Kao Tsung, but refused to go to the capital to see them. The Empress Wu Hou, 685–704 A.D., again sent for him, but when her messengers arrived he was already dead. After this he was

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seen alive, and the Emperor Ming Huang sent for him several times. Later he went to the capital where he entertained the Emperor with many magical performances. Finally during the reign of K'ai Yüan, 713–742 A.D., he was bidden to the palace and offered a high position which he declined. A story is told of him that the Emperor once asked the scholarly recluse

Fig. 50. Chang Kuo

Yeh Fa-shan who Chang Kuo really was, and after having been promised immunity from the consequences of his disclosure, Yeh replied that Chang Kuo was the original vapour. The Emperor was unable to protect Yeh from the consequences of his remark, and Yeh was struck dead. The characteristics of Chang Kuo are that he is represented as riding on a white donkey, usually backwards, and that in his hand he carries a phoenix-feather and sometimes a peach of immortality.

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(6) Han Hsiang is reputed to have been a nephew of the illustrious scholar Han Yü, 768–824 A.D., who was a strenuous opponent of all forms of magic. He became a convert of Lü Tung-pin, contrary to the wishes of his uncle, who desired him to carry on classical studies in preparation for the public examinations. The youth said that the object of his studies differed

FIG. 51. HAN HSIANG

from that of his uncle and that he wished to be able to produce good wine without the use of any grain and also to be able to cause flowers to blossom instantaneously. When the uncle expressed doubt as to his being able to defy the laws of nature, Han Hsiang put a little earth under a basin, and, upon lifting it, disclosed two flowers, on the leaves of which were written in gold characters a poem of two lines of seven characters each. The poem referred to the clouds blocking the path on the Ch'ing Peak and snow filling the Lan Pass. Han Hsiang re-

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fused to explain the meaning of the poem, but his uncle understood it later when he was exiled by the Emperor to Ch'ao-chou in Kuangtung Province. The characteristic of Han Hsiang is a gourd-shaped basket full of the peaches of immortality and held in the two hands. Sometimes he is also represented holding a bouquet of flowers.

FIG. 52. TS'AO KUO-CHIU

(7) Ts'ao Kuo-chiu, according to the *Hai Yü Ch'ung K'ao*, was a younger brother of the Empress of Jên Tsung, 1023–1064 A.D. He was a man of exemplary character who attempted to persuade his dissolute brother to lead a good life. He said to his brother: "You may escape the penalty of the law, but you can never elude the net of Heaven which is invisible but always present." He gave away all his money to the poor and retreated to the mountains where he lived as a recluse. Here

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he was visited by Chung-li Ch'üan and Lü Tung-pin with whom he conversed about spiritual matters. In reply to their questions he said that his heart was Heaven, whereupon Chung-li replied: "The heart is Heaven and Heaven is the Way. You now know the origin of matter." After this interview Ts'ao was introduced by the two visitors into the company of the Immortals. In rebuttal of this account of Ts'ao the critic Hu Ying-lin points out that the historical records of the Sung dynasty give full particulars regarding the brothers of this Empress, and that there is no account of any one of them having decided to lead the life of a hermit. The characteristics of Ts'ao are that he is dressed in official robes, wears an official hat and carries in his right hand a tablet signifying his rank and his right to imperial audience.

(8) Ho Hsien-ku is the only woman classed among the Immortals, unless Lan Ts'ai-ho is conceded to have been one. She was a native of Tsêng-ch'êng in Canton Province, and lived during the time of the Empress Wu Hou, 684–705 A.D. At the age of fourteen she dreamt that by eating the powder of mother-of-pearl (*yün mu fên*) she would attain immortality. After eating this powder her body became ethereal and she was able to pass to and fro among the hills at pleasure. She always returned to her home at night, carrying with her the herbs which she had gathered during the day. Gradually she stopped taking food, and at last disappeared, after having been sent for by the Empress Wu Hou. Fifty years later she was seen floating upon a cloud, and later a magistrate, Kao Huang, in the city of Canton, was rewarded with a sight of her on account of his great virtue. Her characteristic is the form of a beautiful woman carrying in her hand a lotus-flower or sometimes the peach of immortality which was given to her by Lü Tung-pin.

In a drama called "The Celebration of the Birthday of Hsi Wang Mu by the Eight Immortals" an account is given of the splendours in which the Fairy Queen lived. In her palace-

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gardens there was abundance of strange flowers and wonderful herbs. Rare birds strutted about, and remarkable animals performed tricks for the amusement of guests. The flat peach (*p'an t'ao*), was hanging ripe from every peach-tree in the great orchard. In the pavilions and bowers musicians discoursed and the air was filled with fragrance. The Eight Im-

FIG. 53. HO HSIEN-KU

mortals presented a scroll to Hsi Wang Mu on which were seventy-six characters written by Lao Tzŭ. The scroll itself was made of a silk fabric which had been found by one of the fairies, naturally woven. The seventy-six characters were set out in stars and the tassels were made of threads cut from the rainbow. The guests were waited upon by the five daughters of Hsi Wang Mu and were persuaded to drink deeply. The fairy Lan Ts'ai-ho sang a dancing song. When the sumptuous

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celebration was ended the Eight Immortals left for their homes thoroughly intoxicated. This is one of the earliest accounts of the Eight Immortals.

The wine which the Immortals drank is called "celestial wine" (*t'ien-chiu*). Those who drank of it became more intelligent and quick-witted. In reality this wine was a sweet

Fig. 54. Ho Hsien-ku, Chang Kuo

heavenly dew (*kan-lu*). The *Shên I King* narrates that there was a man living on the other side of the North-west Sea who drank five gallons of this wine daily; and no wonder, for he is said to have been two thousand *li* (about six hundred miles) in height. There is another kind of wine which is scented, and the drinking of which is associated with the flying of kites on the ninth day of the ninth moon. This wine is made from the stems and leaves of the aster, which are allowed to ferment and

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are said to be ripe for drinking on the ninth day of the ninth moon of the following year. A tale is told of Fei Ch'ang-fang, of the Han dynasty, that a disciple of his followed his advice to go to the hills to drink aster-scented wine and to fly kites on this day. On returning home he found that all his domestic animals had met a violent death, and he knew that if he had not fol-

FIG. 55. WEAVING DAMSEL AND SHEPHERD BOY

lowed the wise advice given to him by Ch'ang he would have met a similar fate. The *Fêng Su Chi* narrates that on the hills of the Li district (Nan Yang) of Honan Province large asters grow. In the valley between these hills there is a village where many of the people live to be one hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty years old on account of drinking water which is flavoured by the asters. Kite-flying and the drinking of aster-scented wine are both popularly connected with the lengthening of human life.

Concerning Fei Ch'ang-fang, who was mentioned in the preceding paragraph, it is said that he studied magic under Hu

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Kung in whose powers he was led to believe by observing that he slept every night in a gourd which hung on his door-post. When Fei had completed his studies and was about to start out for his home, Hu Kung presented him with a magical rod by the use of which he could instantly transport himself without effort from one place to another. He thought when he reached home that he had been absent only for a short time, but discovered that more than a half-score years had passed. When he laid down his staff in his home it became a dragon, and thereafter he was able to control the powers of darkness.

One of the most popular legends is that of "The Weaving Damsel" (Chih Nü). She was deprived of her lover, "The Shepherd Boy" (Niu Lang) in his youth, but magpies have taken pity upon her in her loneliness. Every year, on the seventh day of the seventh moon, magpies fly to the Milky Way (*t'ien ho*), over which they make a bridge by each catching the head-feathers of the bird nearest to him. On this bridge the separated couple are able to pass to each other and renew their vows of eternal love.

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CHAPTER XI

OCCULTISM

THE records of the earliest events in the life of the Chinese people reveal a race fond of speculative ideas which had a constant tendency toward occultism. Their powers of observation were remarkable, but what they saw was absorbed rather than analyzed. They studied natural phenomena not for the purpose of seeking an explanation of their origin, but chiefly to know the effect of these upon human life. They were a very practical people in all matters relating to the facts of daily life, while at the same time they gave loose rein to their imagination in interpreting these facts. In other words, they were practical in recognizing effects and imaginative in interpreting causes.

The occult sciences, *ao-tsê*, in one form or another, are found at the beginning of Chinese history and have been practised continuously down to the present time. There have been, however, epochs when these sciences flourished with especial strength.

Before the dawn of history the time to which the largest number of myths trace their origin is the age of the Yellow Emperor, as has already been mentioned in Chapter II. In historical times the first Imperial promoter of occult sciences was the Emperor Shih Huang 221–209 B.C., of the Ch'in dynasty. He was the inheritor of the speculations found in Lieh Tzŭ and Chuang Tzŭ which were bitter in their destructive criticism of the ceremonial order favoured by Confucius and Mencius, while at the same time they were wholly receptive to belief in all kinds of marvellous events. According to these two books, men could pass through fire without being burned, could travel through the air, could walk through solid rock and jump

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from high precipices without taking harm. These books, which are professed expositions of Lao Tzŭ, form a curious combination of ethical precepts with occult practices. They were the forerunners of the policy and ideas of Shih Huang, who is almost as famous in Chinese history for his patronage of occultism as for his burning of the classical books and his melting the ancient bronze vessels to make statues.

The reigns of Wu Ti, 140–86 B.C., and of Yüan Ti, 48–32 B.C., of the Han dynasty, were periods when occultism was in especial favour; and also the reign of Ming Ti, 58–76 A.D., of the later Han dynasty, during whose reign and that of Ho Ti, 89–105 A.D., the magician Chang Tao-ling received high honours. Another Wu Ti, 265–290 A.D., was also an eminent patron of these sciences. He was of the Western Chin dynasty. The time of the Warring States, 420–618 A.D., was especially favourable to the spread of all forms of experimentation in supernatural affairs, so that when T'ai Tsung, 627–650 A.D., came to the throne and succeeded in bringing the whole country under the sway of the T'ang dynasty, he found the minds of the people accustomed to and filled with belief in magical and occult events. It was during his reign and that of his successor Kao Tsung, 650–684 A.D., that these beliefs were organized into the Taoist religion as it has been known since that time. Kao Tsung was under the influence of a learned magician, Yeh Fa-shan. This Emperor ennobled Lao Tzŭ and made his book a classic (*King*) under the name of *Tao Teh King*. Another T'ang emperor, Hsüan Tsung, 713–756 A.D., popularly known as Ming Huang, raised the book *Lieh Tzŭ* to the rank of a classic under the name of *Ch'ung Hsü Chên King*, and Chuang Tzŭ's book to the same rank with higher grade, calling it *Nan Hua Shêng King*, *shêng* being one step higher than *chên*. He was a firm believer in the magical powers of Yeh Fa-hsi, who is said to have taken the Emperor with him on a journey to the moon. The most flourishing period of occultism in the Sung

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dynasty was during the reign of Hui Tsung, 1101–1126 A.D., when it absorbed many Buddhistic practices and incorporated them into the body of Taoist ceremonials. The short-lived Yüan dynasty excelled all other periods, however, in patronage of occultism and in intense belief in Taoism. During this period the two great Taoist temples of Peking were built, the Po Yün Kuan outside the Hsi Pien Mên, and the Tung Yo Miao outside the Ch'ao Yang Mên. Both of these were under Imperial patronage.

These occult practices are at the present time an essential part of the life of the Chinese people, and it is necessary to examine their origin and content in detail. They may be roughly classified under the headings of divination, geomancy, astrology and alchemy.

Divination is practised in many ways, the two most ancient of which are founded (1) upon the lines made by heating the inner carapace of the tortoise, and (2) upon the arrangement of stalks of the plant milfoil or reed-grass. Divination by means of the tortoise is credited to the Yellow Emperor, 2600 B.C., to the Emperor Yao, 2300 B.C., and to the Emperor Yü, 2200 B.C. The *Li Ki* gives many instances of it during the Chow dynasty, 1122–1255 B.C. It was by this method of divination that the will of the Supreme Ruler, Shang Ti, was ascertained. According to Chapter XXIV of the *Chow Li* the tortoise was first besmeared with the blood of a sacrificial victim which was being offered to the discoverer of this method of divination. The inner carapace of any one of the six kinds of tortoises was heated until five cross lines appeared. These referred to the five elements. Neither the upper nor lower portion of the carapace was taken into consideration; it was only the right and left sections which were interpreted. The marks on these were called the "four omens" (*ssŭ chao*). These omens determined decisions concerning eight contingencies, which were military expeditions, heavenly appearances, grants, treaties, results, arrival,

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rain and pestilence. In divination by milfoil only the stalks of this plant were used and these were cut into two sizes, full length and half length. These were thrown down and then spread out into nine groups, which were called by the names of the nine ancient augurs. The names and meanings of the groups corresponded to those of the Eight Diagrams, and their interpretation was given accordingly. There is no explanation of the connection between the use of milfoil combinations and the Eight Diagrams; the fact of their being used simultaneously is, however, undoubted.

The Eight Diagrams (*pa kua*) reputed to have been discovered by the mythical Emperor Fu Hsi, are stated by the *Chow Li* to have been used in divination and to have been directly connected with the use of the tortoise and milfoil. They are eight combinations of lines of full and half length. The first has three whole lines, one over the other, and is called *ch'ien*, i.e. "Heaven" or "the active principle of the universe." The last consists of three divided lines, and is called *k'un*, "Earth" or "the passive principle." The second refers to breath, the third to fire, the fourth to thunder, the fifth to wind, the sixth to water and the seventh to mountains. This is the generally accepted explanation of the curious names given to these Diagrams. These names have given rise to theories on the part of several foreign writers that they are of foreign origin, but this is entirely improbable. The Diagrams fit in too closely with the other features of ancient Chinese life to lend any credence to such theories. The "Book of Changes" (*I King*) says that the great primordial principle, or Apex (*t'ai chi*) evolved the two principles, *liang i;* the two principles produced four exemplars, *ssŭ hsiang*, and from these came the Eight Diagrams (*pa kua*). The "two principles" referred to are (1) a continuous straight line —— called *yang i*, and (2) a broken line — — called *yin i*. Yang is the active or male principle of nature and corresponds to Heaven and light. Yin

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PLATES IV, V

COURT OF THE TUNG YO TEMPLE, PEKING, SHOWING THE TABLET WRITTEN BY CHAO MÊNG-FU

COURT OF THE TUNG YO TEMPLE, SHOWING REVERSE OF THE TABLET WRITTEN BY CHAO MÊNG-FU

See pp. 23, 71, 135.

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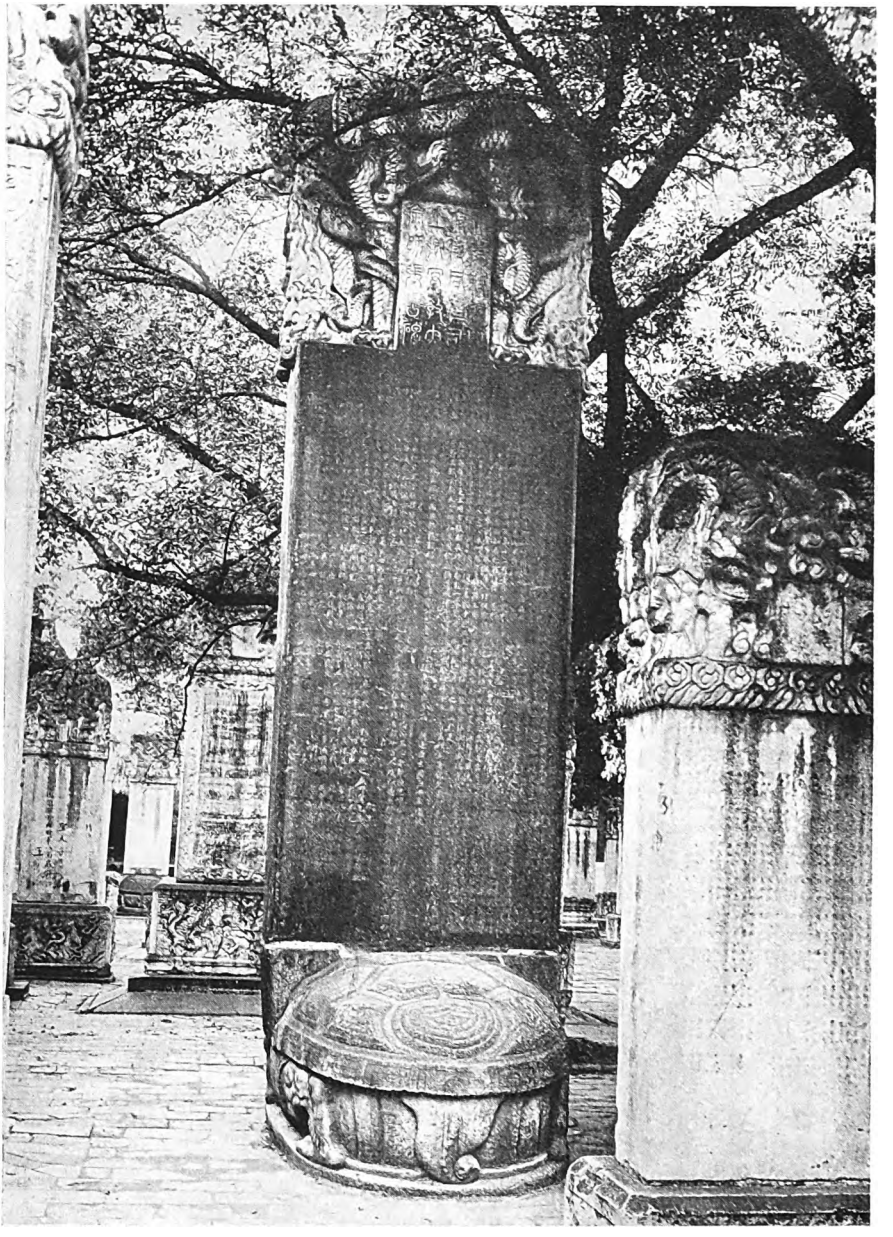

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is the passive or female principle and corresponds to Earth and darkness. The "four exemplars" are (1) two unbroken lines one over the other ⚌; (2) an unbroken over a broken line ䷂; (3) a broken over an unbroken line ䷃; and (4) two broken lines, one over the other ䷇. The first, called *t'ai yang*, corresponds to the sun and warmth in nature, to the eyes and mind in man, and to supreme power in the state. The second, called *shao yin*, corresponds to the moon and cold in nature, to the ears and emotions in men, and to the unifying central power in the state. The third, called *shao yang*, corresponds to the stars in nature, to the nose and the outward appearance in man, and to rightful power in the state. The fourth, called *t'ai yin*, corresponds to the planets in nature, to the mouth and the bodily frame in man, and to usurpation in the state. All these metaphysical ideas are in full agreement with the statements of the earliest records of China. It is thus certain that the origin of the Eight Diagrams is connected with ancient observations of the powers of nature and with the desire to foretell and explain their workings in relation to the life of mankind.

The three philosophical systems of divination developed from the Eight Diagrams of Fu Hsi are known as *lien-shan*, *kuei-ts'ang* and *chou-i*, which may be roughly translated as "connections," "collections" and "transmutations." It is said by some writers that the "connection system" (*lien-shan*) was that used in the Hsia dynasty, 2205–1766 B.C., and the "collection system" (*kuei-ts'ang*) in the Shang dynasty, 1766–1122 B.C., while the "transmutation system" was developed by Wên Wang, 1231–1135 B.C., the author of the "Book of Changes." Wên Wang, while he was imprisoned by the tyrant Chou, studied the Eight Diagrams and added to each one a short explanation (*t'uan*). He is also said by some authorities to have been responsible for the expansion of the Eight Diagrams into sixty-four by the process of multiplying each origi-

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nal diagram with itself and the seven others. A sixfold multiplication of these gives three hundred and eighty-four diagrams (*kua yao*). It is claimed that a further multiplication of these lines brings the number up to sixteen million seven hundred and seventy-seven thousand, two hundred and sixteen (16,777,216) forms, which would seemingly be sufficient to include all possible changes in future events.

In Tso's Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn Annals" (*Ch'un Ch'iu*) many instances are given of the use of the tortoise and milfoil in divination. In the Chapter on the Duke of Min, the commentator says that just before the birth of Ch'êng Chi, the Duke Huan, who was one of the Five Chieftains who domineered the country during the seventh century B.C., asked the father of Ch'u-ch'iu, master of divinations, to consult the tortoise-shell. He received an answer that the child to be born would be a boy who would be a great help to the reigning House. He then consulted the milfoil and was assured that the child would be as distinguished as his father. This answer was predicated upon the conjunction of two sets of milfoil, one in the shape of the *ta-yu* diagram ䷍ and the other in the shape of the *ch'ien* diagram ䷀. This is given as an example of the method of divination. The commentator mentions other incidents when there were consultations regarding the marriage of a daughter, the advisability of joining the service of a certain feudal lord, military expeditions, and other events.

Since the time of the T'ang dynasty the popular methods of divination have been by the use of bamboo slips (*ch'ien*), and by the dissection of ideographs (*ts'ê tzŭ*). According to the *Ling Ch'ien Shu*, in divination by bamboo slips one hundred long thin slips are prepared, on one side of which are written cyclical characters such as *chia chia, chia i*, etc. The other side is left blank. The meaning of the slip which is drawn by the enquirer is interpreted by the standard explanation of the two characters written thereon. There are several other systems of

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using bamboo slips. One of these uses forty-nine slips; in another poetical stanzas are written on the slips, which are then called "divining poems" (*ch'ien shih*). In the use of the bamboo slips an amusing tale in the life of Ti Ch'ing, eleventh century A.D., is told by Doré. He was appointed by the Sung Emperor Jên Tsung, to suppress the rebellion headed by Nung Chih-kao in the distant Province of Kuangsi. Desirous of encouraging his soldiers to believe in the certainty of victory he ordered a consultation of the bamboo slips in the presence of his entire army. The slips which were chosen were all most favourable, and it was not discovered until later that these slips were written on both sides.

The practice of divination by the dissection of characters, i.e. onomancy, is said by the *Lang Ya* to have begun with the name of Wu Wang, founder of the Chow dynasty. The radical of this character Wu is *chih*, which means "to stop," and the phonetic is *ko*, which means "arms"; the combination of the two dissected parts means "to stop the use of arms," i.e. to bring peace. His name was therefore prophetic of his great work in bringing peace to the country. This method was also resorted to by Kung-sun Shu (ob. 36 A.D.) who was led by the favourable result obtained to proclaim himself Emperor of Shu, the modern Szechuan. This practice has been defended and observed by leading men of all succeeding generations and is still in vogue among the people.

Connected with divination is physiognomy, *hsiang mien*, i.e. reading fortunes by the features of the face. This is a very ancient practice in China, as is evidenced from the fact that it is denounced by Hsün Tzŭ in the third century B.C. The name of T'ang Chü of the fourth century B.C. is preserved as a noted reader of countenances. Details of the appearance of all the great men of antiquity are given in books on this subject. There is probably no other branch of the occult sciences which has had greater influence in determining events of national importance

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than physiognomy. Confidence in powers which a man is credited with on account of the contour of his face has often determined courses of action. Belief in this art and recourse to it are common among all classes of people at the present time.

Geomancy, of which the popular name is *fêng shui* and the classical name *k'an yü*, was first explained in detail by Kuo P'o, 276–324 A.D., who is said in his youth to have received from Kuo Kung a black sack containing writings on occult subjects. Kuo P'o is the reputed author of *Tsang Shu* (" Book of Burial Customs "). In this work he says that, in burial, advantage should be taken of the " spirit of life " or " life breath " (*sêng ch'i*), in which case the winds would be scattered and the water of the locality stopped. This attention to the winds (*fêng*) and water (*shui*) of the place of burial is what has come to be known as *fêng shui* or " geomancy."

There is a difference of opinion among Chinese writers regarding the time when this science originated, but the writings of Kuo P'o show that it was generally accepted in his time. The term *k'an yü* is found in the Chapter on Arts in the History of the Han dynasty, but it is variously interpreted. Hsü Shên, author of the *Shuo Wên*, who died 120 A.D., had already explained these two ideographs in the sense of supervision of heavenly and earthly laws, and this meaning is followed by Yen Shih-ku in his annotated edition of the Han History, thus disagreeing with the interpretation of Mêng K'ang, of the third century A.D., who is the standard commentator on this History. It is thus evident that Kuo P'o was writing about a custom which was well-established and generally recognized in his time. This view is confirmed by a reference in Chapter XVIII of the *Li Ki* to the white linen clothes which should be worn by an enquirer, and to the skin cap worn by the interpreter when the carapace of the tortoise was examined to decide upon the place of burial of a high officer of state. The development of the science into the determination of the fortunes of relatives and

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descendants according to the lucky or unlucky site of the grave of a deceased person, was a development later than the time of Kuo P'o in the Han dynasty, and was due to the influence of astrologers, together with other workers of magical charms. The original idea of *fêng shui* is easily understood when the geographical conditions of early China are considered. "The wind" (*fêng*) must be kept in mind when a burial site is on an elevation, otherwise the strong winds might blow away the earth of which the grave-mound is made. "Water" (*shui*) must be guarded against in low places lest the grave should be permeated with water. This natural solicitude on the part of relatives and descendants was easily taken advantage of by astrologers to use their own magical devices in determining sites and in adding their promises of lucky or unlucky consequences. The practice of *fêng shui* is now universal in China in the choice of burial places. It was also extended before the T'ang dynasty to the selection of a site for the residence of the living. Many books have been written explaining and commenting upon the "Burial Customs" of Kuo P'o, and two different schools of interpretation have arisen. One school bases all burial rites upon the indications given by the Five Planets and also upon the Eight diagrams (*pa kua*). The second school bases its theories of burial entirely upon the external appearance of the locality and the relation of the surrounding water-streams to the dragon.

The instrument used in the selection of sites for residence or burial is the *lo-p'an*. The *lo-p'an* ("compass") is usually enclosed in a wooden circular frame, and is used not only for indicating directions but also for geomantic determination. On the frame are seven concentric circles. The outer circle and the third from the outside contain the sixty hexans; the second, the fourth and the sixth are divided into twenty-four groups composed of the twelve cyclical branches, the ten cyclical stems and the two primordial principles, *ch'ien* and *k'un;* the fifth contains four of the five elements thrice repeated (Earth omitted);

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the seventh, which is the inner one, has eight spaces named after eight of the twelve cyclical stems. As the object of enquiry in both these selections relates to the Earth, the name of the element Earth is omitted from the five elements on the *lo-p'an* as well as the four cyclical stems which are connected with the negative principle of nature, Yin. Another explanation of the omission of Earth is given by the *Lu Shih*, which is that Earth is the centre of the five elements and the other elements are placed around it at the four points of the compass. This would place Earth at the centre of the needle of the compass —

Water
Metal Earth Wood
Fire

The *Lu Shih* also explains the four "heavenly appearances" (*ssŭ hsiang*), as related to these four elements.

Astrology (*kuan hsiang*) is based upon the "Book of Changes" (*I King*). It is concerned with the male and female principles of nature represented respectively by the sun and moon, with which are associated the five planets. These planets are representatives of the five elements. Mars is fire, Venus is metal, Mercury is water, Saturn is earth and Jupiter is wood. There are twenty-eight constellations or stellar mansions to which such names are given as the horn, the neck, the bottom, the room, the heart, the tail, etc., and these are related to the seven heavenly bodies (sun, moon, and the five planets) in the same order as in our names of the days of the week. Their circles are subdivided by combinations of the ten cyclical stems, the twelve cyclical branches, together with the first two of the Eight Diagrams, as has already been explained in the description of the *lo-p'an*. In such standard works as *Shou Shih Shu* by Kuo Shou-ching of the Yüan dynasty, detailed rules are given for the use of these various signs, but there is a lack of uniformity in the rules given by various other authors. The

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conjunction of planets determines the fortune of certain years and the fate of the nation. The lucky, unlucky and uncertain days of the year were formerly published in the " Imperial Calendar " (*T'ung Shu* or *Huang Li*), and were decided by the position of the sun and moon in the zodiac. It is held by some authors that the origin of astrology is not earlier that the third or fourth century A.D., and should be placed during the time of the " Warring States " (Chan Kuo) when the country was overwhelmed with the internecine wars of contending princes and each was anxious to determine beforehand the probability of success in his undertakings.

In determining the astral influences which surrounded the birth of an individual, there is an examination of the " eight characters " (*pa tzŭ*) which represent in pairs the year of birth, the month, the day and the hour. This method is said in the *Wên Hai Po Sha* to have been invented by Li Hsü-chung of the eighth century A.D., a noted master of astrology, who examined only " six characters," those of the year, month and day. The hour is said by this book to have been added in the Sung dynasty. The older T'ang History, *Chiu T'ang Shih* ascribes the authorship of the system to Lü Ts'ai who took as a basis for his calculations the " eight characters " of the Emperor Wu Ti of the Han dynasty. A comparison of the " eight characters " of a young man with those of the young woman whom it is proposed he will marry, is always made by the middlemen who are arranging the wedding. Enquiries as to the general good-luck of any individual, or as to the advisability of any proposed action, are also answered by an analysis of these " eight characters."

An Inspector of Astrology was originally appointed under the T'ang dynasty, his name at that time being Ssŭ T'ien T'ai. During the Ming dynasty his name was changed to Ch'in T'ien Chien and his duties were divided under four heads, (a) astronomy (*t'ien wên*), (b) events (*li su*), (c) divination (*chan*

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hou), (d) futurity (*t'ui pu*), and his office was on the eastern wall of the city of Peking at the place now known as the Observatory, Kuan Hsiang T'ai, where the large bronze instruments are placed. This Observatory was divorced from astrology by the Republic in 1912, and is now devoted entirely to modern astronomy and meteorology.

Alchemy, or the pursuit of the secret of transmuting other metals into gold and the search for the *elixir vitae*, is explained first in the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* ("Covenant of Unity"). This book is said by Ko Hung in his *Shên Hsien Chuan* to have been written by Wei Po-yang of the second century A.D., but this attribution has been generally discarded by later scholars. It is, however, of value in showing that alchemy was practised in the last years of the Han dynasty. The author of *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* bases his work upon a passage in the "Book of Changes" (*I King*), which refers to the Yao Hsiang, i.e. the "Yao appearances" or the "Yao manifestations." This passage reads that "the movement of the Yao Hsiang is within; the results of prosperity and disaster are without." This phrase may be compared with the *solve et coagula* of European alchemists. The standard commentaries interpret this dark saying as a reference to Yin and Yang, the passive and active principles of nature, but the author of *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* claimed that it referred to the possibility of the transmutation of metals. The name of the book, "Covenant of Unity," was suggested by its contents, which are intended to prove the unity of the science of alchemy with the teachings of the "Book of Changes," as well as with those of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzŭ — *Huang Lao*. This book was highly commended by the two great classical scholars of the Sung dynasty, Chu Hsi and Ts'ai Yüan-ting, the former of whom wrote an exposition of its teachings under an assumed name. The two systems of alchemy which are known as *la chia* and *lu ho* are based upon this book. *La chia* is the system of joining the ten cyclical branches with the Eight

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Diagrams as indications of the favourable moment when transmutation can be expected; the *lu ho*, as its name indicates, is the system of experimentation with the crucible. The author of this book is said by Ko Hung to have succeeded in preparing pills of immortality. He gave one to a dog which dropped dead; he then took one himself with the same result. His elder brother, who believed in the magic power of the pills, took a third pill and also died at once. A younger brother proceeded to arrange for their burial, but in the midst of the preparations the two came to life. They were thereupon enrolled as Immortals.

Ko Hung, who made the first reference to the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*, himself wrote a famous book, *Pao P'o-tzŭ*, on the same subject, in addition to his other famous work, *Shên Hsien Chuan*. Ko Hung is usually known from the name of his book as Pao P'o-tzŭ, and deserves the first rank among those who are responsible for the perpetuation and spread of occult teachings in China. His influence has been greater even than that of Chang Tao-ling, though he has not been accorded the same high honours. He lived in the fourth century A.D. and spent the last years of his life on the Lo-fou Mountain experimenting with the pill of immortality. When he was eighty-one years of age a friend whom he had invited came to see him but found only his empty clothes. His body had disappeared into the realms of the Immortals.

The *Shên Hsien Chuan* of Ko Hung narrates that Li Shao-chün learned the art of the crucible from An-ch'i Shêng, third century B.C., who was a contemporary of the Emperor Shih Huang of the Ch'in dynasty, as Li Shao-chün was a contemporary of the Emperor Wu Ti, second century B. C., of the Han dynasty. An-ch'i Shêng was known by the sobriquet of Pao P'o-tzŭ from which Ko named his book mentioned above. The "Historical Record" (*Shih Chi*) of Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien narrates that Li Shao-chün advised the Han Emperor, Wu Ti, to sacri-

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fice to the crucible, and that if he did so, the attendant deities would cause it to transmute mercury into gold. From this gold the Emperor could have cups fashioned, and such cups would cause what he ate and drank to prolong his life. He could then visit An-ch'i Shêng in the Isles of the Blest and himself attain to immortality. Li assured the Emperor that he himself had visited An-ch'i Shêng in the happy abode and had seen him eat-

FIG. 56. CONTROL OF THE BREATH

ing dates which were as large as melons. These references to Li Shao-chün and his master An-ch'i Shêng evidence a belief that the use of the crucible was much earlier than the time of the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*, and carry it back to the reign of Shih Huang, 249–221 B.C., if credibility may be attached to these legends of the two men.

Closely connected with the search for a panacea and for the cordial of immortality are many methods for promoting long

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life. Among these the most conspicuous are three: (1) control of the breath, (2) control of the emotions, and (3) abstinence from food. The control of the breath — *hsing ch'i* or *fu ch'i* — is a system which originated with the above-mentioned Ko Hung. The first step in this control is to take a deep inhalation of breath and hold it during one hundred and twenty beats of the heart before exhalation. The period from midnight till noon is full of vitality and this control should be practised at that time. From noon till midnight is a lifeless period and no benefit is gained by carrying on the exercises. If control of the breath is attained by an individual it will cure many kinds of disease and lengthen life. When full control is perfected, a condition of repose supervenes and an individual reaches the goal of a full understanting of the principle of life, *tao*. The control of the emotions — *ch'ing ching* — with which was associated abstraction — *ting kuan* — is considered fundamental to the lengthening of life, and many prescriptions leading to this end are detailed in Taoist books. Of these none is more important than abstinence from food — *p'i ku*, especially from all kinds of meat. Vegetarianism was the first step toward fasting.

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CHAPTER XII

FOLK–LORE

THE occult sciences as described in the preceding Chapter are the dignified forms in which the beliefs, traditions, and customs of the common people have taken shape at the hands of the authors whose good style has placed their books in the category of literary writings. In addition to such books there has been, in every generation since printing was invented, a large number of popular publications which contain other versions of tales and which add many accounts too undignified to be noticed by the standard books. The origin of many of these traditional beliefs and customs is unknown and unsought; there has been little or no tendency to study their sources or to analyze their meanings. They are accepted from generation to generation by all classes as they are found, and without doubt this process has been going on from the earliest days of the race, thus mixing the newer tales of one generation with those handed down from antiquity. It is often difficult to determine how much of any given tradition is ancient and how much modern, and perhaps this is of little consequence. The main fact to be recognized is that all tales which have survived can be considered rightly as expressive to some extent of the spirit of the people.

Knowledge of the exact modern sciences has only extended as yet to those who have been educated abroad or in schools established during the last two or three generations. The largest proportion of the people still accept their traditions without any questioning. To them Heaven and Earth are full of mystery. There is little distinction between animate and inani-

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mate; all nature is animate. Its benevolent and malevolent processes are alike to be regarded with awe and fear. They are under the control or supervision of certain spirits or animals or forces whose favour is to be gained and whose wrath is to be avoided if possible. No country in the world is so rich in lore as China, and no language has more proverbs than that of its people. Every event of life has settled itself into a traditional form and is described by some apt phrase.

The three great events of existence, viz. birth, marriage and death, are surrounded with traditional observances, every one of which has its own significance. Malignant influences are supposed to be especially active at childbirth, and many devices are practised to avert them. Up to fifteen years of age a crisis occurs every three years. Boys are sometimes dressed as girls or wear rings in their ears to deceive the evil spirits who do not care for girls. Marriages are arranged through go-betweens by a comparison of the "eight characters" (*pa tzŭ*). If the boy dies before the ceremony takes place, the living bride is afterwards married to him by using his spirit-tablet as a proxy. This ceremony of "marriage by tablet" (*pao p'ai tso ch'in*) is usual when the prospective bridegroom is of a greater social distinction than the bride. At death the deceased is dressed in his best clothes, and in the coffin are placed any small ornaments of which he may have been fond during life. Paper money, paper houses, paper horses and carts, as well as clothing, are burned after death to ensure that the spirit is well provided for in the future world.

Charms, talismans and amulets of various kinds are used to avert calamity. If one wears on his body a piece of jade he will never be thrown from an animal which he is riding. The shoes of children are embroidered with tigers' heads; lucky objects such as cash-swords are hung in houses, and other objects of various geometrical shapes are worn on the body; the fylfot or swastika is found in all sorts of places, e.g.,

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on the wrappers of parcels, on the stomach or chest of idols and on eaves of houses; the character for longevity (*shou*) is also used in similar ways:

> "His shoes are marked with cross and spell
> Upon his breast a pentacle."

These charms are needed at all times, for it cannot be known when or where evil spirits will appear. It may be the ghost of someone who has been injured by you, or merely some devil bent on the execution of his own caprice. It may be a hungry ghost wandering through space in search of some compensation for its previous miserable existence on earth, or a "rigid corpse" (*chiang shih*), which at night-fall or on moonlight nights comes from its coffin and waylays travellers. It may be the "woodmen" (Shan Hsiao) mentioned in the Southern T'ang History, which have the bodies of men and feet like the claws of a bird and which live in the trees. It may be the demon of fire or pestilence, disease or death; but whatever its designs may be it can be prevented from carrying them out by the possession of true virtue or superior intelligence. As a matter of fact, virtue and intelligence are interchangeable ideas when one is dealing with devils.

A curious tale was told years ago by Mr. C. T. Gardiner of the British Consular Service. "There were two partners, named Chang and Li, returning on one occasion by way of the canal from Yangchow, where they had been collecting debts. Chang saw Li standing on the edge of the boat, and the crime of pushing him into the water, and thus becoming sole possessor of the money, suggested itself. Chang, therefore, pushed Li into the canal. Next year, at the time the murder was committed, Chang fell very ill, and the ghost of Li appeared to him in a threatening form, and told him that unless he paid over the sum properly belonging to the dead man's family, he would die. Chang promised to do so, and got well, but his

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health being restored he broke his promise, and still kept the money. Again, the following year, at the same time, Li's ghost appeared, looking still angrier. Again Chang was induced to make the promise, and this time he kept it. However, his health seemed permanently to suffer, everything went wrong, business fell off, and he determined to try and change his luck by migrating to other parts; he consequently went to Honan. What was his astonishment when he again saw Li, not now in the middle of the night by the side of the bed where he lay sick, but in broad daylight, and in the street. His terror was extreme, he rushed forward, and made a *ko-tow*, and said: 'I have already done as you ordered me, why do you still haunt me?' To which Li replied: 'I am no ghost; what do you mean?' Then Chang told him how he had twice appeared, and how his share of the money had been paid to his family. Li then said: 'So, it was not an accident my falling into the river? I had neglected to pay due respect to the spirit of my father, and when I tumbled in the river, and was nearly drowned, I thought it a punishment for my impiety.'"

Determined action on the part of a strong-willed individual is often sufficient, without outside aid, to affect the power of devils. A story is told of a house at Hangchow which was supposed to be haunted. No one dared to live in it and it was always locked. "A scholar named Ts'ai bought the house: people all told him he was doing a dangerous thing, but he did not heed them. After the deed of sale had been drawn out, none of his family would enter the house. Ts'ai therefore went by himself, and having opened the doors, lit a candle and sat down. In the middle of the night a woman slowly approached with a red silk handkerchief hanging to her neck, and having saluted him, fastened a rope to the beam of the ceiling, and put her neck in the noose. Ts'ai did not in the least change countenance. The woman again fastened a rope and called on Ts'ai to do as she had done, but he only lifted his leg and

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put his foot in the noose. The woman said, 'You're wrong.' Ts'ai laughed, and said, 'On the contrary, it was you who were wrong a long time ago, or else you would not have come to this pass.' The ghost cried bitterly, and, having again bowed to Ts'ai, departed, and from this time the house was no longer haunted. Ts'ai afterwards distinguished himself as a scholar."

FIG. 57. CHUNG K'UEI

Usually, however, outside help is invoked. Chung K'uei with his awful face is ready with his help for those who seek it. It is said that he was a scholar in the Sung dynasty who was frightfully disfigured by an evil spirit on the night previous to taking his examination for the highest literary degree. As a result of the dreadful condition of his face he was not able to take his examination, and therefore he swore vengeance against these demons. Being a man of extraordinary intelli-

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gence in life, he has been able since death to use his great gifts in the spirit world in combatting the evil influence of devils which are intent on injuring mankind. The name of Chiang T'ai Kung, i.e. Chiang Tzŭ-ya, cut on stone — "Chiang T'ai Kung Tsai Tz'ŭ" — and placed at the end of an alley-way or written on paper to be hung over doors, is sufficient to frighten

Fig. 58. Shih Kan Tang

away evil spirits. The name of Shih Kan of T'ai Shan is also commonly cut on stone — "T'ai Shan Shih Kan Tang" — and used in the same way as that of Chiang T'ai Kung. The most potent name of all is that of the "Celestial Teacher" (*t'ien shih*), who is the lineal successor of Chang Tao-ling. Mystical characters written by him are hung at places where their help is needed in the home. In 1707 the then incumbent of the post of "Celestial Teacher" was ordered by the Em-

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peror K'ang Hsi to offer sacrifices at all the five great mountains, and while on his journeys also to charm away the ghost of the "white sheep" at Huang-chow, and the "red monkey" on the Tung-t'ing Mountain of the T'ai Hu, near Wusih in Kiangsu Province. Witches are called in by women to chant incantations against evil influences, and the aid of powerful ancestral spirits is invoked by the use of medicines. The entire range of human inventiveness has been canvassed to discover propitious means for averting misfortunes.

Fig. 59. The Goddess of T'ai-shan, Niang Niang

The portentous influence of dreams is clearly recognized, as dreams are supposed to be due to the inspiration of spirits. A recluse of T'ai Shan dreamed that the goddess of the mountain, Niang Niang, instructed him to proceed to Peking to cure the illness of the Emperor Chên Tsung, 997–1022 A.D., of the Sung dynasty. On arrival he found that the Emperor was in great pain caused by a large boil. He prescribed treatment and relieved the Emperor of his trouble. The mother of Chang Tao-ling is said to have dreamed that the spirit of the Pole Star descended and gave her a fragrant herb which scented her clothes with its perfume. On awaking she found herself with child and in due course gave birth to a son who became the great mystic. A man in Shanghai dreamed that he was in a

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PLATE VI

CHANG TAO-LIN, TAOIST PATRIARCH

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place at the rear of a certain temple where he suddenly came upon a hidden treasure of gold. As soon as he awoke he went to the place, dug a hole and discovered a large quantity of gold, each piece of which was marked with his own name. An old man and woman are said to have appeared in a dream to the Prince of Yen who became the Emperor Yung Lo, 1403–1425 A.D., of the Ming dynasty. He had just completed the building of the present city of Peking with its nine gates and magnificent palaces. The people were loud in their praise of the beauty and strength of the city, and looked forward to a period of great prosperity and peace. Unfortunately it was not long before a severe drought ensued and the wells were all dried up. The cause of the drought was reported by this old man and woman to have been the disturbance of the abode of two water-dragons at Lei Chên K'ou, a village to the east of Peking outside the Tung Pien Mên. The dragons decided to gather up all the water of the district in two large baskets and retire. Before doing so they wished to obtain the consent of the Prince, and for this purpose assumed the guise of the old man and woman in the dream. The Prince consented, but on awaking in the morning and realizing what he had done, he concluded that this old man and woman were none other than the dragons. He put on his armour, mounted a black horse, and with spear in hand, hurried out of the palace and through the city gate in pursuit. He overtook them, plunged his spear into their baskets, and out came a plentiful supply of water.

Cruelty, which seems inherent in human nature, has taken many forms in China, most of which are associated with supernatural events. The practice of burying servants and workmen in the tombs of early Emperors seems to be well-authenticated. Cannibalism has been practised in all the great famines which have so often happened. The black art (*tso tao*) has been responsible for many evil practices, and laws directed against it were very strict in the late Manchu dynasty. Among the ten

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inhuman crimes (*pu tao*) mentioned in the fourth volume of the Legal Code of this dynasty, the fifth crime includes the mutilation of the living body to obtain certain organs for use in witchcraft, the manufacture of the *ku* poison, or witch's potion, and the employment of incantations or charms to inflict the curse of the "Nightmare demon" (Yen Mei). A case of mutilation of the bodies of young girls in order to secure their vital powers was punished in 1810. The Commentary on the Code also states that those who practise witchcraft after invoking the Nightmare demon, take the eyes and ears of human beings, cut off their hands and feet and fasten these members upon a carved or moulded image which they employ for their own diabolical purposes. The blood of criminals who have been beheaded is gathered on pieces of cloth or absorbed on bits of food which are then used as charms against evil influences. The custom of drinking a cup of the blood of a notorious enemy who has been slain in battle or executed after capture, was performed by a well-known Viceroy in 1904. This potion was supposed to add courage to the one who drank it. The Code also mentions an abominable kind of cruelty which consisted in kidnapping young persons in order to roast their organs and bones for the purpose of manufacturing medicine. All forms of witchcraft and sorcery which led to the maiming or killing of persons, were punishable under the Code with the severest penalties, viz., death by the slicing process, confiscation of property and banishment for life of wife and sons. Such practices were considered an illegitimate use of supernatural powers.

Of all the animals which can influence human events, the fox enters chiefly into popular tales. As an illustration of this, the following is a summary of the tale of two sisters, taken from the "Strange Stories of the Liao Studio," (*Liao Chai Chih I*). There was once a young student named Shang, a native of T'ai Shan. One evening as he was wandering alone

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in his garden, a beautiful young girl appeared, walked and talked with him and entertained him vastly with her beauty and wit. She introduced herself as the third daughter of the Hu family, and thus called San Chieh, but would not tell him where she lived. Night after night she appeared and their friendship advanced. But one evening as he was admiring her beauty she told him that she had a younger sister, Ssŭ Mei, who was much more beautiful than she. At his request, she brought Ssŭ Mei with her the next night, and Ssŭ Mei proved to be indeed lovely. When San Chieh rose to leave, Shang begged Ssŭ Mei to stay for a while. Hardly had San Chieh left when Ssŭ Mei warned Shang that San Chieh was a fox, and that, but for her own intervention, he would surely have been bewitched. She gave him a charm to paste on his door, for, she said, though she was also a fox herself, she knew the arts of the Immortals and could protect him. The next day San Chieh returned but was unable to pass the charm on the door, and left, with bitter rebukes for her sister's ingratitude. However, even Ssŭ Mei's beauty could not hold the fickle Shang, for, when some days later she was obliged to be away a short while, he allowed himself to be charmed by an attractive young woman who approached him with a gift of money, telling him that the Hu sisters could never bring him a cent, and asking him to provide a feast for her that evening in his rooms. Shang was perfectly willing, but as the evening was proceeding gaily, the two Hu sisters appeared, drove out the intruder, who was also a fox, and re-established their old friendship with Shang. But affairs were not to continue thus. One day a man appeared from a distant Province. He had been searching the country over for the evil spirits who had killed his brother, and found them in the house of Shang. Shang himself had kept secret his friendship with the Hu sisters, but his father and mother were alarmed, invited the traveller in, and told him to act as he pleased. He at once produced two bottles,

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muttered various charms, and suddenly four slender threads of smoke were seen to pass into the bottles. He at once sealed up the bottles, declared with joy that this whole family was now safe, and sat down to feast with Shang's parents. Shang himself could not feast while his friends were suffering their sad fates, and he wandered over to the bottles. Bending over them he heard the voice of Ssŭ Mei begging him to release her. She gave Shang directions how to proceed, and soon one little thread of smoke disappearing into the clouds was his last view of the charming young Ssŭ Mei. Ten years later she appeared to him one day and told him that she had attained immortality. He begged her to stay with him, but as an Immortal she could no longer mingle with mortal affairs. Only once again did he see her, twenty years later, when she appeared in his room, beautiful as ever, to tell him that she had come to announce to him the approaching day of his death, so that he might put his affairs in order, and that he need fear nothing, for she would see him safely into the other world. And on the day appointed, Shang died.

Evil spirits also assume the form of snakes, and conversely snakes present themselves as ordinary mortals. One of the most famous stories of snakes is that of the "White Serpent" of Hangchow, which came from the Green Mountain near Ch'êng-tu in Szechuan Province where it had lived from ancient times, and was accustomed to take the form of a woman accompanied by a maid-servant. The victory of this White Serpent over a Black Serpent which had lived in Hangchow before the combat, is told in the novel called "Thunder Peak Pagoda" and is as follows: "Hang-chow is a most beautiful place. The residences of princes and nobles are here, and beautiful flower-gardens and ancient temples are scattered all over the place. Among these, the garden of Prince Chow was pre-eminent for beauty; but Prince Chow had long been dead, and his beautiful garden was deserted by mankind.

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In it were altars, pavilions, and fountains almost equalling in splendour the gardens of the Imperial palace. Here there resided a huge black serpent, which had been in this place for more than eight hundred years. This serpent could ascend into the clouds, and take the human form; and when she saw the white serpent coming in, she hurried to prevent her entrance, saying: 'Whence comest thou thus to invade the privacy of my garden? Dost thou not fear my wrath?' The white serpent, who had assumed human form, as had the other, merely smiled and said: 'Don't talk about your power, but pay attention to what I am going to say. I am a powerful white serpent, come from the mountain-cavern of the winds, where I have resided more than eight hundred years; but because I am not so powerful as I could wish, I have determined to change my abode, wherefore you must let me take up my residence in this garden. Besides this, why should we quarrel, being both spirits in the form of serpents?' But the black snake was not so easily pacified, and angrily exclaimed: 'This is my garden, and you are a spirit from some distant place. How then do you dare thus to deprive me of mine own? If, moreover, you think yourself more powerful than I am, let us contend together three times for the mastery.' The white serpent smiled slightly, and said: 'It is no desire of mine that we should contend together, as I do not wish to injure one of my species; but since you so much wish it, I *will* contend with you, but upon this condition only, that whoever shall be victorious in the strife, shall become the mistress, and that the conquered one shall always act as a slave.' The black snake, still angry, snatched a sword and cut at the white serpent, but she, drawing two swords, put them before her in the form of a cross. In a few minutes the superior talent of the white serpent became evident, for by muttering a powerful spell, the sword was snatched from the hand of her adversary by some invisible means, and she was left defenceless. The black serpent at this

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was very much frightened, and kneeling down, respectfully addressed the other, saying: 'Do not contend any longer. I acknowledge you as my superior, and am willing to serve you as your slave.' Matters being thus settled so satisfactorily, the mistress and servant entered the garden together."

These are but a few examples of folk-lore and are entirely insufficient to give the reader an adequate idea of the number and variety of popular tales. This can be obtained by reference to such books as Giles' *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*, MacGowan's *Chinese Folk-Lore Tales*, and other books. The examples here given are intended only to illustrate the wide scope of the traditional beliefs and customs of the Chinese people.

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CHAPTER XIII

EXEMPLARY TALES

TALES with a moral are very popular. Of these none is ranked higher by general consent than the series collected by Kuo Chü-yeh of the Yüan dynasty, and known as the "Twenty-four Examples of Filial Piety" (*Êrh-shih-ssŭ Hsiao*). Each of the persons cited left an example of filial piety worthy to be emulated by succeeding generations.

(1) The first on the list is the Emperor Shun, 2317–2208 B.C. His mother died when he was very young, and his father took a second wife by whom he had a son Hsiang. He preferred this son and tried frequently to do away with Shun. The house in which he lived was set on fire, and on another occasion he was thrown into a well, but was miraculously preserved. Escaping from these plots against his life he maintained the same respect for his father and love for his younger brother. His exalted virtue was known to Heaven and Earth so that when he ploughed the fields, beasts hurried from unknown places to pull his plough, and when he weeded, birds came to assist him. When he was only twenty years of age he became known to the great Emperor Yao, who gave him his two daughters, Hsiang Fu-jên, to wife, and later set aside his own son in order that he might confer the Empire upon this filial youth.

(2) The Emperor Wên Ti, 179–156 B.C., of the Han dynasty, who, during his mother's illness of three years never left her apartment nor changed his clothes.

(3) Tsêng Ts'an, 505–437 B.C., a disciple of Confucius and the reputed author of "The Great Learning," was on the hills

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as a child gathering firewood when his mother bit her finger. He also felt the pain at once and hastened to her aid. While weeding in a garden he carelessly cut the root of a melon, whereupon his father beat him mercilessly. When he related the incident to Confucius, Confucius blamed him for not having got out of his father's way lest he should have inadvertently been so unfilial as to have been the cause of his father putting him to death. Even after such treatment by his father, he was so full of affection that he would never eat dates because his father had been fond of them. He only prepared food once in three days and changed his clothes once in ten years.

(4) Min Sun, sixth century B.C., was also a pupil of Confucius. He was treated badly by his step-mother who favoured her own two sons. He was so sparsely clad that his hands became numb and he dropped the reins when driving a cart. At last the harsh treatment of his son enraged the father and he decided to divorce the woman, but Min Sun pleaded for her, saying that it was better that one child should be cold than three left motherless.

(5) Chung Yu, 543–480 B.C., another disciple of Confucius, is more frequently spoken of as Tzŭ-lu. When he had been promoted to high honours he grieved for his deceased parents and longed for his childhood days when he carried rice for more than a hundred *li* in helping to support his parents.

(6) Tung Yung, second century A.D., had no money to pay the funeral expenses of his father and sold himself into servitude in order to raise the necessary amount. When he returned home he met a young woman who offered to marry him and to release him from bondage. The creditor demanded three hundred pieces of silk, which the prospective bride gladly set herself to weave. She finished the work in a month and then informed Tung Yung that she was "The Weaving Damsel" (Chih Nü), who had been sent by God to reward him for

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his devotion to his father. The name of Tung's birthplace was changed to Hsiao Kan, which is a station on the Peking-Hankow Railway, just north of Hankow.

(7) Yen Tzŭ is said to have lived in the Chow dynasty. His parents having expressed a desire for doe's milk, he dressed himself in deer's skins, mingled with a herd of deer, and thus obtained the milk.

(8) Chiang Ko who lived about 500 A.D., during the troublous times of the Six Kingdoms, rescued his mother from robbers by carrying her a long distance on his back.

(9) Lu Hsü, of the first century A.D., was imprisoned for complicity in a treasonable plot. His mother went to the prison carrying food which the jailer delivered to him. At the sight of it he knew that it had been prepared by his mother.

(10) T'ang Fu-jên, or as she is frequently called, Ts'ui Shih, is the only woman mentioned for her devotion to her family. Her mother-in-law had lost her teeth on account of age, and T'ang Fu-jên nourished her with milk from her own breast.

(11) Wu Mêng, fifth century A.D., would not drive the mosquitoes away from himself lest there should be more of them to annoy his parents.

(12) Wang Hsiang, 185–269 A.D., was a native of Shantung. In order to gratify the desire of his step-mother for fish during winter, he lay down naked on the ice of a pond till a hole was thawed from which jumped two fish which he carried home to her.

(13) Kuo Chü, second century A.D., was very poor and there was not enough food for his mother, his wife, himself and their young son. He proposed to his wife to kill their son so that there might be enough food for his mother, saying that they might have another son but they could never have another mother. The parents agreed to bury the child alive, but when they dug the hole in the ground they found there a bar of gold on which was inscribed a legend stating that it was a gift of the

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gods. This prevented the necessity of sacrificing their own child.

(14) Yang Hsiang of the Han dynasty, was only fourteen years of age when his father was attacked by a tiger. He threw himself between his father and the tiger, thus saving his father's life at the expense of his own.

(15) Chu Show-ch'ang, 1031—1102 A.D., was the son of a concubine and was taken away from his mother to live with his father in Peking. When he grew up to manhood his mother had disappeared, and he tried every possible method of finding her, even resorting to the self-castigation of the Buddhist priests, such as cauterizing his back and head with live incense-sticks. He searched for fifty years and finally found his mother.

(16) Yü Ch'ien-lou, sixth century A.D., resigned his official appointment after ten days in order that he might return home to care for his sick father.

(17) Lao Lai-tzŭ is a legendary character who is said to have lived during the Chow dynasty. His parents lived to a great age, and when he himself was seventy he dressed in fantastic clothes and performed antics before his parents for their amusement.

(18) Ts'ai Shun, first century A.D., nourished his mother with ripe berries while he himself ate only green ones. After the death of his mother a fire threatened their house. Ts'ai Shun threw himself upon his mother's coffin and prayed that it might be spared from destruction. His prayer was answered. The surrounding houses were all burned but his house escaped unharmed. During her lifetime his mother had been afraid of thunder, and after her death, whenever a thunder storm arose, Ts'ai Shun went to her grave to urge her not to be alarmed.

(19) Huang Hsiang lost his mother when he was only seven years of age and grieved so much over her death that he be-

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came as thin as a skeleton. He devoted the rest of his life to taking care of his father and is said to have fanned his father's couch in the summer and to have warmed it in winter by lying between the blankets until his father wished to retire.

(20) Chiang Shih lived during the Han dynasty and was almost equalled by his wife in devotion to the family. His wife walked several miles every day to bring river-water to her mother-in-law because she knew that she preferred it to well-water. Chiang Shih's mother was also fond of fish and as a reward of his filial piety a spring suddenly opened near his residence, providing delicious drinking water and producing two fishes every day.

(21) Wang P'ou, third century A.D., lamented the untimely death of his father, who was beheaded for making the statement that the Kingdom of Wei had been defeated by Wu and thus destroying the *esprit de corps* of his own people. He was accustomed to sit beside a pine tree and weep for his father. So copious were his tears that they caused the tree to rot.

(22) Ting Lan, first century A.D., carved a figure of his mother in wood and offered to the effigy the same respect as if it were really his living mother. While he was away one day his wife refused to lend something to a neighbour who had come for it, whereupon the neighbour struck the wooden effigy. When Ting Lan returned at night he saw an expression of displeasure on his mother's effigy, and, seizing a stick, went to the house of the neighbour and gave him a sound thrashing. When soldiers came to arrest him for this assault, they desisted upon finding that the effigy was weeping tears.

(23) Mêng Tsung, third century A.D., tried during winter to get some bamboo shoots for which his mother had expressed a desire. While strolling in a bamboo grove and giving loud expression to his grief he was rewarded by finding bamboo shoots suddenly springing up around him.

(24) Huang T'ing-chien, 1050–1110 A.D., is celebrated as

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one of the Four Great Scholars of the Sung dynasty, but even this high distinction is eclipsed by his reputation for filial piety. He watched his sick mother for a whole year without leaving her bedside or even taking off his clothes. At her death he grieved so bitterly that he almost lost his own life.

In the *Tung Chow Lieh Kuo Chih* ("Records of the Eastern Chow"), which is a novel describing events in the Chow dynasty after 781 B.C., a tale is told of the favourite concubine of the Emperor Yu Wang, 781–770 B.C. She was called Pao Ssŭ. When she was a girl of fourteen she was seen by Hung-têh, whose father had been exiled by the Emperor. Hung-têh conceived the plan of presenting this beautiful woman to the Emperor as a concubine, hoping thereby to secure the favour of the Emperor and to obtain the release of his father. The plan was favoured by the Duke of Kuo, and the girl was admitted to the Imperial harem. She soon became a great favourite of the Emperor and presented him with a son. The Empress became very jealous of this concubine and plotted with her son, who was the Heir Apparent, for the downfall of Pao Ssŭ. At the time of an Imperial audience, when the Emperor was receiving his ministers, Pao Ssŭ, venturing into the garden in front of the palace, was set upon by the attendants of the Heir Apparent and mauled mercilessly. As soon as the Emperor heard of it he banished the Heir Apparent, divorced the Empress and proclaimed the son of Pao Ssŭ as his successor. The Emperor did everything in his power to satisfy the whims of this favourite woman, going so far even as to kindle for her amusement the beacon fires on the hills which summoned his baronial chiefs to the rescue of his capital. The dismay of these chiefs, who had been fooled by the unnecessary call to arms, caused great amusement to Pao Ssŭ, but the incident proved fatal to the Emperor when at a later period his capital was attacked. The beacon lights were again kindled, but this time without effect in summoning necessary relief. The bar-

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barians attacked the capital and the Emperor with his favourite was slain.

This was in fulfilment of a prophecy which had been made by an astrologer during the reign of Hsüan Wang, father of Yu Wang. During the thirty-ninth year of Hsüan Wang, 766 B.C., the Emperor left his capital and went on an expedition against the Western barbarians. While he was at T'ai-yüan he decided to take a census of the city in order to conscript as large a military force as possible. After doing so he returned to his capital, but on arriving at the suburbs was met by a crowd of children who were singing a song that had been taught them a few days earlier by a youth wearing a red coat. The words of the song were:

> "The sun is setting, the moon is rising,
> The Chow dynasty will be ruined
> By bows of the wild mulberry and quivers of rattan."

The Emperor was greatly distressed by this song and ordered the arrest of the young man who had taught it to the children. At a meeting of the Ministers of state on the following day, the Emperor inquired of them the meaning of the song. Po-yang Fu, who was Director of the Astronomical Board, replied that this youth was Mars as shown by the red colour of his coat, and that he had sung this song as a warning to the Emperor of the approaching overthrow of his kingdom. This overthrow would not be brought about by the incursions of enemies from without but by the intrigues of a woman in the palace. This was the meaning of the line concerning the setting of the sun and the rising of the moon, the sun meaning the Emperor and the moon an Empress. It was this prophecy which was fulfilled by the dire results of the influence of the concubine Pao Ssŭ over the Emperor Yu Wang.

Hsü Yu is a conspicuous example of modesty in the estimate of one's own abilities. He was one of the Four Philosophers

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of Miao Ku Shê, a hill in the Northern Sea, mentioned by Chuang Tzŭ. The Emperor Yao offered to resign the throne in his favour, but this alarmed Hsü Yu so much that he rushed off to cleanse his ears from the contamination of such words. He was accustomed to drink water by dipping his hand in the brook. Some one gave him a gourd to use for this purpose. Hsü Yu hung it on a tree near his house and the wind whistling through the gourd made a pleasant sound. He did not consider himself worthy to have this pleasure and threw the gourd away.

Even brigands may teach useful lessons. Confucius, accompanied by Yen-yüan and Tzŭ-kung, was travelling south of T'ai-shan. He had an interview with Tao Chih which nearly turned into a tragedy. "Is it not you," the brigand said to him, "whom they call K'ung Ch'iu, false sage of the Kingdom of Lu? In your criticisms and invectives you spare neither military nor civil officials, and it is all simply to throw dust into the eyes of the Prince. You are nothing but a beggar for honours and there is no greater brigand than you. It is by mistake that they call me 'the Brigand,' Chih. It would have been more logical to call you 'the Brigand,' Ch'iu. You pose as a holy man and at heart you are only a clever hypocrite, whose words deserve not the slightest credence." Confucius in return cried: "Why by the goodness of my heart did I raise up these difficulties for myself!"

Liu Chih was the younger brother of Liu Hsia-hui, the disciple of Confucius. He was commonly known as Tao Chih, the brigand. This bandit had a band of nine thousand men under his command, and he was the cause of great trouble in the Kingdom. His band held men as hostages, carried off women, stole cattle and horses, and devastated all the country which they covered. Liu Chih is worshipped as the General of the "Five Brigands" (Wu Tao). The character for "brigand," *tao*, has the same sound as that of "road," and the term "Five Brigands" was originally "Five Roads." It is stated

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in the *San Kuo Tien Lioh* that, before the death of Ts'ui Chi-shu, his wife in a nightmare saw a man ten feet in height whose whole body was covered with black hair. This monster said he had come to injure her. Upon telling her dream to a sorcerer, he said that the one who had appeared to her was the "General of the Five Ways" (Wu Tao Chiang Chün), and that his appearance in her house was a bad omen. According to the critic T'ien I-hêng of the Ming dynasty, who was an authority on poetical references, the General of the Five Ways is the god of the brigands, and the reference is taken from the Ch'ü Ch'ieh Chapter of Chuang Tzŭ. The "Five Roads," i.e., the five qualifications of a successful brigand, are the ability to conceal things, courage to be in the foreground, strength to be the last to leave, prudence to know when to take action and when to refrain, and fairness in dividing the spoils.

During the time of the Emperor Ming Ti, 58–76 A.D., of the Eastern Han dynasty, the country was in a condition of prosperity and peace. This was due to the genius of the Emperor in securing able men from all parts of the country to assist him in carrying on the government. His selection was not made by examination, but solely on the recommendation of his high officials scattered throughout various districts. The district magistrate of Yang-mei recommended a man named Hsü Wu, concerning whom an interesting tale is recorded in the *Chin Ku Ch'i Kuan* ("Curious Tales of the Present and Past"). It is narrated that Hsü Wu was one of three brothers and that his father had died when he was only fifteen years of age, leaving the two younger brothers, Hsü Yen and Hsü P'u, aged respectively nine and seven, in his charge. There was a small estate which required careful cultivation in order to support the three brothers, and this work was undertaken by Hsü Wu. He toiled in the fields during the day, but spent his evenings in patient study. During both of these employments Hsü kept his younger brothers at his side. After a few

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years Hsü Wu not only had succeeded in increasing the value of his property, but had also acquired a good education for himself, and in these two results his younger brothers shared. The Elders of the district called the attention of the magistrate to the great talents of Hsü Wu and urged that he be recommended to the Emperor for appointment. When Hsü Wu reached the capital he was first appointed secretary of a Board and later rose to a very high position.

After a few years of service to the Government, Hsü decided that he would return home and ascertain how his brothers had been prospering. He found that they had made good use of their time both in tilling the soil and in proficiency in their studies. In order to test their real attainments, however, Hsü Wu conceived the plan of suggesting that the estate should be divided, and, in view of his high position as contrasted with that of his brothers, that he should be given the larger portion of the valuable lands and houses which had come into their possession chiefly through the exertions of the two younger brothers. The discipline of the two brothers had been so severe that they readily agreed to Hsü's proposal and contented themselves with living abstemiously in small thatched houses while their more prosperous brother fared luxuriously in the comfortable rooms of the central court. Hsü Wu was not wholly neglectful of the interests of his brothers for he recommended them to the magistrate, who in turn sent in their names to the Emperor as fit persons to receive high positions. In due time the two younger sons were appointed to responsible posts in which they were as successful as their elder brother had been.

The sequel of this story is that when the two brothers resigned from their official positions and returned to their ancestral home, Hsü called together the Elders of the district, and in their presence told his two younger brothers of the plan which he had followed all these years for testing their abilities.

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He had become satisfied that the brothers were men of superior talent and commendable virtue. For this reason he requested the Elders to make a new distribution of the property and money so that he would share equally with each of his two younger brothers, and thus undo what must have been considered as an unjust distribution made several years previously. The younger brothers at first objected to any change and said that they had received in the first instance more than they had deserved, but Hsü insisted on carrying out the plan. This redistribution was successfully negotiated by the Elders, and the three brothers with their families lived to the ripe old age of one hundred years in perfect harmony.

A story is told of Yang Yung-po, a man of the second century A.D. He lived in a mountain pass and was accustomed to supply drink to thirsty travellers. After carrying on this charitable work for more than three years, a wayfarer whose thirst had been quenched, presented Yang with a pot of what he said were cabbage seeds. The stranger told him to plant these seeds in a field and that thereby he would obtain some good jade and also a wife. After planting the seeds, Yang bethought himself of a well-known woman of comely parts who demanded, as the price of her willingness to marry him, two bracelets of white jade. Yang remembered the statements made to him by the traveller and went out to dig in his field, whereupon he was rewarded by finding five pairs of jade bracelets. It is from this tale that the district of Yü-t'ien in the Province of Chihli takes its name — Yü-t'ien having the meaning of "a field of jade."

Shih P'i, a magistrate of the Tê-hua district, lost his wife when he was forty years of age, and was left with one daughter, Yüeh Hsiang, who was then eight years old. Shih P'i was a conscientious man, upright in his dealings, and gifted with great legal discrimination. When he returned in the evenings from his office he would take little Yüeh Hsiang on his knee and teach her characters, or play chess and other games with her.

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One day the nurse who was playing with Yüeh Hsiang, kicked a ball into a tank which was embedded in the floor to hold water. They both tried in vain to pick it out, and finally called Shih P'i, who thought this an excellent time to test the intelligence of his daughter. He asked her to suggest a method of recovering the ball. Yüeh Hsiang, after a few moments' thought, advised that water should be poured into the cavity and the ball would rise to the top. This they did and the ball came out, greatly pleasing Shih P'i.

After Shih P'i had been magistrate in this place for two years, he fell into disgrace on account of the loss of government grain, and died of grief. He left his daughter in charge of her nurse, but in order to pay to the government the debts which had been left, it was decided to sell both the daughter and the nurse. They were bought by Chia Chang, a man who had been pardoned for an offence by Shih P'i, and thought to show his gratitude to him by kindness to his daughter. He took them to his own home and placed them in charge of his wife, telling her that Yüeh Hsiang should be treated as their own daughter. Chia Chang's wife was neither virtuous nor wise, and finding Yüeh Hsiang both beautiful and intelligent, became exceedingly jealous of her. Chia, when he was away from home trading, would find a choice bit of silk or gauze and send it to Yüeh Hsiang to make a dress. This further irritated the wife so much that she could no longer hold her tongue, and she would storm and rage, using anything but the choicest language.

After continued insults which Chia Chang tried in vain to prevent, the wife, taking advantage of the absence of her husband, seized all the pretty clothes which had been given by her husband to Yüeh Hsiang, and then sold the girl as a servant to a bride just married into the family of the magistrate who had succeeded Yüeh Hsiang's father in this office. On the day following her sale, Yüeh Hsiang was given a broom and told

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to sweep the floor. The magistrate, Chung Li, passing through the room, found the new maid-servant leaning on her broom and weeping copiously. He asked her what the trouble was, and she told him the story of the ball which had fallen into the cavity in the floor of that very room, and of her father's praise for her intelligence in suggesting a way of recovering it. She went on and told him of her life since her father's death and of her ill-treatment at the hands of the wife of Chia Chang. The magistrate was greatly impressed and amazed to learn that she was the daughter of a man of his own rank, and he immediately thought of a plan whereby he might atone for having treated the daughter of the late magistrate as a low-born menial. He consulted with the magistrate of an adjoining district, Kao, and arranged a marriage with Kao's younger son. After the wedding Chung Li had a dream in which Yüeh Hsiang's father, Shih P'i, appeared to him, and said that because of the kindness he had shown his daughter, he had interceded with the Supreme Being, who had offered a son as a reward to Chung Li, in order to spread the fame of the family. The deity also highly approved of the conduct of the magistrate Kao, and as recompense to him, had offered to raise his two sons to high office. As soon as Chung Li awoke he told his dream and went to the temple to burn incense, contributing one hundred taels of his salary. In fulfilment of the promise, his wife, at the age of forty years, had a son who became Senior Wrangler. Chung Li rose to the office of Grand Secretary and lived to be ninety years of age.

Chia Chang, upon his return, was angry to find that his wife had sent Yüeh Hsiang and her nurse away, but after investigation was satisfied to learn that they were both happily married. He would, however, no longer live with his faithless wife, and married one of her maids. They had two sons. Thus all parties met with their rewards.

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CHAPTER XIV

THEATRICAL TALES

THE most popular and widely known tales of early Chinese life are those which concern the events at the close of the Han dynasty, when the country was divided into the Three Kingdoms of Shu, Wei and Wu. These were woven into a series of historical dramas called the *San Kuo Chih Yen I* by Lo Kuan-chung in the twelfth century, and soon became the most stirring national events that have ever been produced on the stage. The period covered is from 168 to 265 A.D. The narrative begins with the domination of the eunuchs during the reign of Ling Ti when the Empress Tou was regent. It was against the power of the eunuchs that the great literary statesman, Li Ying, vainly hurled himself at the cost of his life. Soon the rebellion of the "Yellow Turbans" (Huang Chin) broke out, headed by Chang Chio who succeeded in raising a force of nearly four hundred thousand men. This large body of men had been brought together by a common belief in the magical powers of Chang Chio and of his two brothers. These men made capital of this popular trust in their powers, fraternized with the eunuchs and plotted insurrections.

During the rebellion, Liu Pei entered into a solemn covenant with Kuan Yü and Chang Fei, which was known as the "Peach-Orchard Oath" (T'ao Yüan San Chieh I), the purpose of which was to reclaim the declining fortunes of the Han dynasty. These three men, among seven hundred characters, became the central figures of the drama; though this position would scarcely be warranted by historic facts. Of the three, Liu Pei is the foremost as was his right on account of his being

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the descendant of the Imperial House of Han and himself the founder of the Han dynasty in Shu, the modern Szechuan. He is represented as a paragon of kingly virtue. He was always calm and dignified. The men associated with him gave him the respect due to a king. He had some ability as a leader up to the time when he became King; then he lapsed into a state of helplessness, such as is supposed to be natural to this position. He was stern and devoted to justice even to the point of throwing to the ground his infant son who had been rescued with his mother by the personal valour of his General, Chao Yün. He blamed the child for causing a valuable general to run the risk of losing his life. He himself was by no means brave under all circumstances, for when defeat came he took refuge in flight, leaving his generals and soldiers to their fate. He had an extraordinary personal appearance. His ears were so long that they reached to his shoulders, his arms reached below his knees and he could look behind him with his eyes.

The rise of the Three Heroes was very slow. They wandered from place to place associating themselves at one time with one leader, and then with another. Sometimes they helped Ts'ao Ts'ao, and again they are found on the side of Ts'ao's enemies. They met with no signal success until Liu Pei discovered the hermit, Chu-ko Liang, in his reed hut. Liu Pei was astonished to find the profound knowledge of Chu-ko Liang, and likened his discovery to that of a fish being restored to the water. The record of this meeting of Liu Pei with Chu-ko Liang occupies three chapters of the drama, thus emphasizing the importance of this extraordinary man. After the aid of this great General has been secured, the drama narrates the preparations for the great battle at Ch'ih Pi, the modern Chia Yü Hsien, about fifty miles west of Hankow, on the Yangtze River. The army of Ts'ao Ts'ao is represented as numbering about one million men, and so confident was this immense force of its success that it lay idle for a whole month

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waiting for Liu Pei to appear. Previous to the great battle there had been innumerable fights and skirmishes in which various heroes showed their prowess, but the battle had no sooner begun than it ended in the utter rout of Ts'ao Ts'ao. After this great exploit little is said of the two other heroes, Kuan Yü and Chang Fei, whereas much is made of the wonderful deeds of Chu-ko Liang. He headed an expedition to the south where he performed many deeds of valour against the turbulent barbarians called Man I. Liu Pei rose rapidly to power and founded his new Han dynasty with his capital at Ch'êng-tu. This kingdom was not so powerful as that of Wei founded by Ts'ao Ts'ao, nor so wealthy as that of Wu founded by Sun Ch'üan, but lesser attention is paid to these two kingdoms in the plot of the drama, which makes Liu Pei the leading person.

Kuan Yü was the noblest of the Three Heroes. He remained faithful to the oath which he had sworn in the Peach Garden and was always true in his allegiance. Though he was a great warrior, he remained a kindly man, as shown by his allowing Ts'ao Ts'ao to escape from punishment by death for carelessness. When Ts'ao Ts'ao had made him many valuable presents, he returned to his companions still clad in the old armour which had been given to him by his sworn brother. He fought bravely against Sun Ch'üan, and rejected the offer of mercy, though he paid the penalty of it with his life. He had a striking personality, his long flowing beard making him very distinguished in appearance.

Ts'ao Ts'ao was the villain of the drama. He was bold but stupid, and is represented as always falling into traps which were laid for him. He is resourceful in plans but always fails to carry them to completion. His cruelty was constantly being shown by the severe punishments which he meted out to all who opposed his will. He killed the entire household of his father's sworn brother with his own hands and he attempted

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to assassinate Tung Cho. He was not wholly devoid of kindness, as is shown by his treatment of Kuan Yü while he was his prisoner, finally allowing him to escape. He was bold and intolerant, and it was these qualities which brought about his death. He had decided to build a great palace for himself and, in order to obtain a large pillar, ordered a pear-tree to be cut down. Whenever the axe struck the tree groans proceeded from it. This irritated Ts'ao Ts'ao and he determined to cut the tree down himself, but at his first stroke he was splashed with blood. During the following night the spirit of the tree visited him, and after reprimanding him for what he had done, struck him a blow on the head. This blow threw him into a delirium, during which the spirits of the hundreds of people whom he had slain, tormented him, and from this he never rallied.

Chang Fei takes an unimportant part in the development of the plot. He is described as being eight feet in height, with large round eyes, sharp jaws, a head like a leopard and whiskers like a tiger. He was courageous on all occasions, at one time taking his stand upon a bridge and defying the whole of Ts'ao Ts'ao's army. He was the faithful adjutant of Liu Pei and became his Minister after Liu Pei had set up his new dynasty.

The other great hero of the book is Chu-ko Liang, who is generally given the affectionate title of K'ung Ming. It would be impossible to exaggerate the extraordinary virtues which are ascribed to this man. Everything he attempted or advised was certain of success. He is the perfect example of a brilliant genius combined with exemplary virtue. He was able to call to his aid not only the useful inventions which he contrived, but also extraordinary powers which no one else understood.

Innumerable tales have been told concerning the great deeds of this wonderful man. The following is an interesting example of his brilliance in military strategy. In consultation

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with Chou Yü, a clever young statesman, regarding the plan of attack of their enemy Ts'ao Ts'ao, K'ung Ming stated that Ts'ao Ts'ao had collected an army of a million men and would probably attack them by water. He then inquired what would be the best weapons to use in frustrating such an attack. Chou Yü answered that they would need bows and arrows, but that the army was extremely short of arrows and would need at least one hundred thousand. K'ung Ming promised on penalty of his life to produce the required number in three days. He then asked for twenty or thirty large boats, a large quantity of straw and cloth, and about forty soldiers who were to bring drums and gongs with them. When all these were produced, K'ung Ming had the straw made up into shapes like men, which were clothed and placed in position on the decks. Very early on the morning of the third day, K'ung Ming and a counsellor of Chou Yü's named Lu Hsün, who had been detailed to watch events, went aboard one of the vessels with the forty soldiers, the whole fleet was then unmoored and the boats floated down-stream. Just as the boats approached Ts'ao Ts'ao's fleet, a heavy fog fell, all of which had been correctly calculated by K'ung Ming. He then ordered the soldiers to beat their gongs and drums and make as much noise as possible. Ts'ao Ts'ao's archers, alarmed, and fearing an attack, fired in the direction of the sound. This firing continued for over an hour, when K'ung Ming ordered a retreat. As they retired, he ordered his soldiers to shout their thanks to Ts'ao Ts'ao for his liberal supply of arrows. The arrows were found in greatest profusion, sticking to the straw dummies. Over a hundred thousand were thus collected from the enemy without the loss of a single life.

Supernatural powers and extraordinary events are frequently mentioned in the drama. The magical leaders who were with the Yellow Turbans were able to cause stones to fly, fierce winds to arise, and paper men to appear from the earth. When an

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army of men from the kingdom of Wei had attacked the territory of Shu, K'ung Ming frightened them away by suddenly appearing in a ghostly form. When K'ung Ming was on his southern expedition, an old hermit gave him information regarding the best way to attack his enemies, and to Ts'ao Ts'ao an old white-haired stranger appeared telling him how he could build a wall about his camp. At important crises clever advice is given by some previously obscure person, and this advice leads to a great victory. At one time the General Chao Yün appeared with a small troop at the critical moment, when it seemed certain that Kung-sun Chao would be defeated. The marvellous personal appearance of Chao Yün accomplished in a few moments what Kung-sun Chao's army dared not attempt. Leaders burst into beleaguered cities or arrive with dispatches just when the turn of events is most urgent. Rescuing forces are hidden in convenient ravines or behind trees, ready to appear at the opportune time. Such incidents are not necessarily historical but they contribute their share to this remarkable drama, the parts of which have been presented in all probability to more hearers than any similar production in the history of the world. This summary is a very inadequate presentation of *San Kuo Chih*, which would require a book devoted wholly to its translation if one tried to describe all its scenes.

Kuo Ai of the T'ang dynasty was the son of Kuo Tzŭ-i. He was one of a large family of seven sons and eight daughters. On account of the great merit of his father, the Emperor T'ai Tsung arranged the marriage of his daughter with Kuo Ai. This was a high honour, but was considered appropriate, inasmuch as Kuo Ai's father had already been raised to the rank of Prince of Fêng-yang. The young couple did not get on very well together, the husband boasting that it was due to the merit of his father that the Emperor held his throne, and the wife making too much of her rank as a Princess. One day Kuo Ai told his wife that she might be very proud of having

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an Emperor for her father, but that if his father wanted to be Emperor he could easily become such. At this she became very angry and said some harsh things to her husband, whereupon he twice slapped her on the face. She rushed off in a rage to tell her father, the Emperor, and accused her husband of disloyalty on account of the remarks which he had made about his father, Kuo Tzŭ-i. The Emperor took the episode very calmly and said that the squabble which they had had was probably due entirely to their youth. While the daughter was stating her case to her father, Kuo Tzŭ-i himself appeared upon the scene bringing his son Kuo Ai with him, whom he had bound in chains. He requested the Emperor to order the summary execution of his son for the disrespect which he had shown to the Emperor's daughter. The Emperor refused to do so and with magnanimity of spirit pardoned everybody.

Fig. 60. Yo Fei

Other theatrical tales centre around Yo Fei and his wife. After the death of Yo Fei's father he was taught by his mother, and many instances are dramatized depicting the care which the mother took of her son. She chose for him a good wife, and after his marriage he obtained the highest degree in the national examinations. After volunteering for service in suppressing the northern invaders, he himself became the vic-

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tim of false charges. Being imprisoned he was obliged to be absent from his family, and many songs are introduced into plays praising the virtue of Yo Fei in placing public duty before that which he owed to his mother. When Yo Fei returns home he finds his wife and inquires from her where his mother is. His wife informs him that his mother divides her time between teaching his young son and worshipping Buddha. He hastens to see his mother and tells her it was only on account of his desire to see her that he left camp. The mother replies that her only wish is that her son should be loyal to the Emperor. The mother and wife are torn between the two natural feelings of keeping Yo Fei at home and of wishing him to do his duty to his country. It was the time when the Emperor had been taken prisoner by the Nü-chên Tartars and the capital was in the hands of the enemy. Yo Fei wanted to go to the rescue of the Emperor, but could not persuade himself that it was right for him to do so in view of what he should do for his mother. His mother remonstrated with him for this and insisted that he should go. Before sending him off she tattooed four characters on his back which meant "Serve your country with pure loyalty." Yo Fei left his mother and his wife with their blessings upon his head, although he had assured both that it was probable he would never return.

The last days of the unfortunate Ming Emperor, Ch'ung Chêng, 1427–1444 A.D., were full of stirring events, some of which have been dramatized in the famous tragedy "The Lamentation of Ch'ung Chêng" (*Ch'ung Chêng T'an*). The scenes that took place between the Emperor and his family on the fatal days which resulted in the capture of Peking on April 9, 1444, by the rebel Li Tzŭ-ch'êng, are depicted with striking detail. The Emperor recalls the calamities which have befallen the Empire during the seventeen years of his rule — famine, flood, pestilence, drought, fire — all ending in rebellion which his own troops were powerless to quell. Entering

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her court-yard he beheld the Empress shedding bitter tears, but seeing the troubled face of the Emperor she restrained her own feelings and tried to comfort him. While they were talking together the boom of cannon and the neighing of horses mingled with the shouts of the men who were attacking the city. Their son entered and the Emperor left him with his mother while he remained wrapped in his own gloomy thoughts. Suddenly he realized that the two had been gone for a very long time and started to find them, only to discover that the Empress had thrown herself into a well. While he was lamenting the death of his Empress his beautiful young daughter hastened to his side. The Emperor said to her: "How can I allow you to fall into the hands of the rebels?" and thereupon, after tenderly embracing her, slew her with his own sword. He then commanded a servant to go with him to Coal Hill (properly called Prospect Hill or Ching Shan) and to bring writing material. The Emperor partially disrobed himself and climbed, bare-headed and bare-footed, halfway up the eastern side of the hill. Here he stopped to write his last words: "Rebels have captured the Empire. How can I face my ancestors? Do what you like with my body, but do not injure my innocent people." He put this writing into his pocket, loosened his own silk girdle, went up a fir-tree, to a limb of which he tied the girdle and thus hanged himself. When the victorious Li Tzŭ-ch'êng had been led to the spot where the Emperor was hanging, he ordered the body to be taken down and treated with respect. "This was an Emperor who loved his people," was his comment when Li read the paper which was taken from the body of the dead Emperor.

There are many other plots centreing around great characters such as were conspicuous at the founding of the various dynasties. In contrast with these historical plays are those with modern plots which are to a certain extent didactic. As an

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example of such plays the following is a summary of "The Willow Lute" (*Liu Ssŭ Ch'in*). This play has been popular in China for the last two generations.

Li Chi was a wealthy merchant whose wife had died leaving him a son, Po T'ung, and a daughter Kwei Chi. He had married for a second time, taking to wife a woman by the name of Yang San-chun. It became necessary for Li Chi to take a business trip into a distant province. While he was gone his wife entered into a low intrigue with a wealthy libertine of the city, T'ien Wang. One day Po T'ung, the son, saw this man coming out of his step-mother's room, and violently accusing him, he drove him out of the house with blows. The step-mother flew into a towering rage, and when Kwei Chi, the sister, and her old nurse came to Po T'ung's assistance, she set the girl to grinding rice and sent the boy to the hills to gather fuel.

Kwei Chi and the old nurse followed Po T'ung out to the hills, and Kwei Chi begged her brother to go at once and seek their father, giving him her ear-rings and head ornaments to pay for his travelling expenses. After bidding him an affectionate farewell, Kwei Chi watched until he was out of sight, and then in the presence of her old nurse, jumped into the river, saying she would rather die than return to her step-mother. The nurse returned home mourning, but with revenge in her heart against the wicked Yang San-chun.

But Kwei Chi was not drowned, for the Water-god of the river rose out of the depths and bore her away in his arms. It happened that same day that a retired officer, Liu Hsiao-hsiang, with his wife, Lady Wang, was travelling on the river in a great junk. The Water-god brought Kwei Chi to the surface close by the boat, and she was rescued and taken on board. The old couple were so impressed with Kwei Chi's sad story and so charmed with her appearance that, being childless, they decided to adopt her as their own daughter.

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The fate of Po T'ung had not been so happy. He wandered far and wide in search of his father until his money was all spent. Worn and discouraged, he sought refuge in a monastery, where the old abbot took him in as an acolyte. The prefect of that district, coming to the monastery one day to offer incense to the gods, was so much struck with the appearance of Po T'ung that he offered to adopt him. The abbot willingly let him go with the prefect, who promised to educate him in such a way that Po T'ung should have every opportunity for official advancement.

Meanwhile, sad things had been happening at the home of Li Chi. The old nurse, after seeing her beloved charge drown herself, as she thought, returned home to accuse Yang San-chun, and was kicked and beaten to death by her and her low companions. Shortly after, a new complication arose. Chao Chung, who was betrothed to Kwei Chi, came to the house to make final arrangements for the marriage. Yang San-chun invited him to wait in the library, and then plotted with T'ien Wang that they should keep him there until the middle of the night when they would set fire to the building. But as Chao Chung waited there, the ghost of the old nurse appeared and told him of all the evil doings of the wicked step-mother, the supposed death of poor Kwei Chi, and the plot against his own life. Chao Chung, incredulous at first, was finally convinced and fled. His plight was indeed pitiful, for his father had died leaving him very poor. He tried to make a living by writing, but was robbed of what little he had, and finally was reduced to begging and came to the door of Liu Hsiao-hsiang, the retired soldier who had adopted Kwei Chi. Liu was struck with his intelligent expression, and on questioning him, found that Chao Chung's father had been one of his closest friends. So Liu at once took Chao Chung into his family, to give him every chance for study in order that he might attain literary eminence.

Chao Chung's troubles were now over, but his heart was still

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sore at the loss of Kwei Chi, and he would often take his willow lute, the emblem of his betrothal, and sing to himself of his sorrow and his loneliness. One day he happened to leave the lute in the garden, where Kwei Chi, whom of course he had not yet seen, found it. She recognized it at once as the lute which had been given to her lover as a marriage pledge, and rushed in to ask her adopted father and mother how it chanced to be there. In response to their questions she told them of her betrothal to Chao Chung. They were delighted at the amazing coincidence, and asking Kwei Chi to retire, they sent for Chao Chung. When he came in, old Liu Hsiao-hsiang suggested that a marriage might be arranged between Chao Chung and their daughter. Chao Chung told them of his betrothal to Kwei Chi and said he desired no other wife. They then called for Kwei Chi, and the surprise and delight of these two young people at finding each other again was beyond description. The marriage was at once arranged and took place amid great festivities.

But while things were going so well with the son and daughter, their poor old father, Li Chi, had fallen upon terrible days. He returned from his long trip penniless, having been robbed by two highwaymen of all his earnings. He reached home to be greeted by the news from his wife that his son and daughter had both died of a serious illness. As he was mourning them, a maid-servant came to him and told him the truth about his wife's unfaithfulness and the fate of Po T'ung and Kwei Chi. Yang San-chun overheard the maid's charge, flew to her evil associate, T'ien Wang, and together they plotted the most wicked deed of all. They kicked the poor maid-servant to death, placed her body in the room of Li Chi, and then T'ien Wang went to the magistrate's office and accused Li Chi of having outraged and murdered the girl. Li Chi was brought before the magistrate and tortured on the rack until he confessed, to save his poor old bones, whereupon he was thrown into prison.

Meanwhile Chao Chung passed his literary examinations bril-

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liantly and was appointed magistrate of the district of Pao Ch'ing, Kwei Chi's old home. With his wife he proceeded at once to take up his new appointment. Poor old Li Chi was being tortured in his prison-cell while his sufferings were unknown to his own daughter living happily so near him. The god, Tai Po, one night took pity and conveyed the words and groans of Li Chi to the ears of his daughter. She thought she had been dreaming, but the next morning made inquiries and found that in truth it was her own father who was thus confined and suffering. She sent for him, and, having disguised herself so that he would not recognize her, heard his sad tale of the unjust accusation and her step-mother's crime. Kwei Chi went at once to her husband to plead for her father's release. He said he could do nothing, since the old man had made a written confession, but that the new Governor would be arriving that day and that the case might be laid before him. But there was one difficulty. In the absence of the old man's son, who could appear to plead for him? Kwei Chi immediately said that since her brother was not there she herself would plead in his stead. When Chao Chung protested that such an act would disgrace him as a magistrate, Kwei Chi said that to save her father's name she would despise any office and climb to Heaven or crawl to the depths of the earth. Her husband was much touched by her filial devotion and promised to help her, regardless of the public consequences.

The Governor arrived, entered the Hall of Justice, and called for the first case. Kwei Chi was brought before him and handed him a statement of her suit. The Governor commenced to read it, started violently, looked at Kwei Chi, then ordered the court to be cleared and Kwei Chi conducted to an inner room. When he followed her in, she discovered that the Governor was none other than her long-lost brother, Po T'ung. Her husband, the magistrate, came in and joined in the happy reunion, and their father Li Chi was at once sent for. He ar-

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rived to find his family restored to him, and their happiness was complete. And as for the wicked Yang San-chun and her companion, they found the fate that they deserved on the execution-ground.

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CHAPTER XV

BUDDHIST MYTHS

BUDDHISM entered China from Central Asia in the year 67 A.D., during the reign of the Emperor Ming Ti. The two bonzes, Matanga and Gobharana, brought with them Buddhist books which they are said to have carried on the back of a white horse. They settled at Lo-yang which was then the capital, and the Emperor built for them, east of the city, the first monastery in China and named it "The Monastery of the White Horse" (Pai Ma Ssŭ). The buildings on this site have been repaired many times during succeeding dynasties. Buddhism made slow progress in China. The bonzes, who were nearly all foreigners, devoted their time to the translation of books. In the Chin dynasty, during the latter part of the third century A.D., Buddhism began to flourish under Imperial patronage. During the reign of An Ti of the Eastern Chin dynasty, Fa Hsien made his famous journey to India to secure books, pictures and relics. The Chin dynasty was succeeded by the Liu Sung, 420 A.D., and during this dynasty Buddhism made further progress in propaganda. Wu Ti, 502–550 A.D., the founder of the Liang dynasty, aided in disseminating the new faith and set an example to his people by taking monastic vows and by public preachings of Buddhistic doctrines. It was during his reign that the Indian patriarch, Bodhidharma, who was the twenty-eighth successor of Buddha, came to China by sea, landing at Canton. He was well received by the Emperor at Nanking and continued his journeys northward to the region ruled by the Northern Wei dynasty, generally known as the House of Toba. Here he entered the Shao Lin Temple on

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the Sung Mountain where he sat for ten years in contemplation with his face to the wall. He was the founder of Zen, a Mahayana School, which later became the most prominent and widely diffused sect of Buddhism in China. Its teachings agreed in almost all particulars with the ethical teachings of Lao Tzŭ in the *Tao Teh King*, and the methods of its hermit devotees corresponded to those of the early ascetic followers of the Tao. This likeness of the Mahayana teachings to those of the liberal philosophers of early China accounts chiefly for the later rapid spread of Buddhistic doctrines throughout the country. This religion was recognized as foreign in origin, but it was claimed to be Chinese in reality as far as its teachings were concerned. In later centuries its foreign elements caused it to be persecuted, as in 446 A.D. when Ts'ui Hao discovered a secret supply of arms in a Buddhist temple at Ch'ang-an, on account of which Buddhism was prohibited, priests were put to death and temples burned. Again in the eighth and tenth centuries there were severe persecutions, but during all the opposition the close resemblance of the teachings of the Mahayana sect to the contemplative asceticism of the followers of the Tao preserved for it a place in the national life of China. After the rise of Taoism as an organized religion under the Emperor T'ai Tsung of the T'ang dynasty, it was recognized that there were but few distinctions between the Mahayana type of Buddhism and the established form of Taoism. Taoism adopted to a large extent the Buddhistic methods of organization, and Buddhism on its part sloughed off more and more its foreign characteristics. There came to be three religions, San Chiao, recognized officially throughout the country, viz. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

In previous chapters no mention has been made of the myths connected with Buddhism, for the reason that any myths which are peculiar to it are foreign in their origin and therefore cannot be considered as Chinese even though they are current

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among the people. Most of the other Buddhistic myths which are of Chinese origin are shared in common with Taoism; but a few remain exclusively Buddhistic. One of the most noted mythological accounts is that of the adventures of Yüan Chuang, a priest of the seventh century, who travelled to India in search of Buddhist books. On his return he dictated an account of his travels to Pien Chi, and his narrative is chiefly concerned with a description of the various countries through which he had passed during his journey of sixteen years. This book is called *Ta T'ang Hsi Yu Chi* ("Western Travels in the T'ang Dynasty"). During the Yüan dynasty the noted Taoist Ch'iu Ch'u-chi was sent by the Emperor Genghis Khan to India and was accompanied by his pupil Li Chih-ch'ang. On their return Li wrote the account of their wanderings and of the miraculous events which he had learned to have happened to the priest Yüan Chuang on his earlier visit.

The title of Li's book is taken from the earlier one, and it is called *Hsi Yu Chi.* This later book is full of miraculous events which, although they are interpreted from a Taoist standpoint, are all connected with the Buddhistic monk Yüan Chuang, and for this reason are classified under the heading of Buddhistic myths. The first part of this book contains an account of the wonderful genealogy of Yüan Chuang.

There was a young student by the name of Chên Kuang-jui, of the city of Hai-chow. Hearing that a competitive examination was to be held in the capital city of Ch'ang-an, he decided to go up and try his fortune. When the examination was over it was found that Chên had taken first place. He was at once appointed to a magistracy in Kiang Chow, whither he proceeded with his old mother and his bride, the daughter of the Chancellor Wei Chêng. After a few days of travel, the old lady became so fatigued that they stopped at an inn to rest. One morning Chên bought a yellow carp from an old fisherman, thinking that his mother would enjoy it. But as he carried off

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his purchase he noticed that the fish had closed its eyes, and he remembered an old saying that a fish which closed its eyes was not what it seemed to be. So he at once threw the fish back into the river. After staying some days at the inn, they found that the old mother was still not able to travel. As Chên was obliged to be at his post by a certain time, he got a house for his mother, made her quite comfortable and then proceeded on his journey with his wife.

When they came to the river Ch'ang Kiang, they took a boat to be ferried across. One of the boatmen, named Liu Hung, became enamoured of the beauty of Chên's wife, and with the aid of one of his companions, concocted a wicked plot. They waited until it was dark, and, when they had reached a deserted spot, they fell upon Chên and his servant, murdered them and threw their bodies into the river. The young wife tried to throw herself in after her husband, but was prevented by Liu Hung who dressed himself in Chên's clothes, secured his letter of appointment, and set out for Kiang Chow. Chên's body sank to the bottom of the river, where it was found by one of the spirits of the night-watch and reported to the Dragon King. The Dragon commanded the body to be brought before him, and at once recognized Chên; for, as it happened, the Dragon himself had been in the body of the fish which Chên had restored to the water. The Dragon at once ordered that Chên's ghost and soul should be brought to him from the temple where they had taken refuge. When the ghost of Chên had appeared before the Dragon King, and had described in detail the foul murder, the Dragon in return told of his indebtedness to Chên, invited his ghost to be a general in his own body-guard, and had his body carefully wrapped up and preserved until the proper time should come to restore Chên to life. On the journey to Kiang Chow, Chên's wife first resolved to kill herself, and then decided that, as she was pregnant, it was her duty to wait until her child was born. If it should be a son, he could avenge his

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father's death. When they reached Kiang Chow, the villain Liu was accepted as the new magistrate, Chên. In due time Chên's wife gave birth to a son. When Liu Hung saw the child he ordered it at once to be killed, but the mother begged that he would wait until the next day, when she herself would cast the child in the river. The next morning she bit her arm and, with the blood, wrote on the baby's clothing his name and those of his parents, and why he had been cast into the river. Then she bit a small piece out of the child's right small toe so that she would be able to recognize him in future, and wrapping him up carefully took him to the river's edge. Just as she was about to cast him in, a plank came floating by. Thanking Heaven for answering her prayers, she tied the child to the plank and set him adrift. The plank floated away, and finally grounded in front of the Chin Shan monastery where the abbot, hearing a child's cry, came out and rescued him. He read the writing on the child's clothing, put it away carefully, and brought up the boy in the monastery. When he was eighteen, he was made a Buddhist monk and was given the name of Yüan Chuang. Finally the old abbot told him the tale of his arrival, and showed him the blood-written characters on his baby-clothes with their tragic story. Yüan Chuang immediately begged leave to seek his mother, which the abbot granted. He found her still at Kiang Chow, made himself known to her, and great was her joy at the miraculous return of her son. They then planned that Yüan Chuang should seek his grandfather, the old Chancellor Wei, and through him petition the King for the punishment of Liu Hung and his confederate. Yüan Chuang at once set out for the capital. When the King heard the story, he was so much incensed at the villainy of Liu Hung and the deception which he had so long practised that he gave immediate orders for the arrest and punishment of the two criminals. The Chancellor and Yüan Chuang went back to Kiang Chow with the troops who were to carry out the King's orders. Li

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Ku, the confederate, was first beaten and then cut into a thousand pieces, while Liu Hung was taken to the river-bank near the place where the murder was committed. There his heart and his liver were torn out and burned, with sacrifices to the spirit of the murdered Chên. The report of this was at once carried to the Dragon King who summoned the ghost of Chên, told him that his murderers had met their deserts and that, as his wife and son were sacrificing on the river bank to him, he might that day return to them. He then gave Chên many beautiful gifts and ordered some of the spirits to release Chên's body, carry it to the mouth of the river, and there return to the body its soul. As Chên's wife was bewailing and lamenting her dead husband at the edge of the river, suddenly a corpse was seen floating toward them. As it came near, she recognized it as the body of the long lost Chên. They drew it ashore, and as they were wondering how such an amazing thing could have happened, suddenly the body began to move, and sat up. And then Chên opened his eyes, to the astonishment and joy of his wife and son. He appeared equally astonished at finding himself where he was, but soon heard the whole story. There was great rejoicing all through the city at the resuscitation of Chên Kuang-jui, and the King was so interested that he appointed Chên to a high educational post. Yüan Chuang, the son, returned to the Chin Shan monastery.

In every possible way Buddhism adapted itself to Chinese opinions. It adopted Chinese architecture for its temples. It allowed the government to impose upon it a form of organization on the pattern of that of the State. It chose country sites for its great monasteries, and gradually developed four great centres in famous mountains which now rival, if indeed they do not surpass, the original noted "five mountains" (*wu yo*). The four Buddhist mountains are (1) P'u-t'o, on an island called by the same name off the coast of Chehkiang, near Ningpo, (2) Chiu-hua, in the Province of Anhui, situated

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southwest of Wuhu, (3) Wu-t'ai, in the Province of Shansi, and (4) O-mei, in the Province of Szechuan. By invoking and honouring spiritual beings whom it found already existing in China, Buddhism departed from the teaching of its founder, and the chief intimate connection with this teaching was maintained through its insistence upon the duty of meditation. The practice of meditation was well-known in China before the arrival of Buddhism, and had been carried on from ancient times by the "Masters of Recipes" (*fang shih*). These men were known in the Chow dynasty and flourished in large numbers in the Ch'in. They were recluses who devoted their whole time to magical practices such as necromancy, exorcism and incantations. Buddhism found these men a good example for its own priesthood and their abodes models for its temples.

There has never been any clear-cut distinction between Buddhism and the teachings of the Liberal School which culminated in the Taoist religion. This has been true not only among the common people, but also among learned writers. Even the Emperor Hui Tsung, 1100–1126 A.D., of the Sung dynasty, who was an ardent supporter of Taoism, conferred upon Buddha the title of "The Golden Immortal of Great Knowledge" (Ta Chio Chin Hsien), thus incorporating him by Imperial authority in the Taoist pantheon. The Chinese have given their own adaptation in many instances to the Buddhistic deities brought from India. The historic Buddha, Śākyamuni, is represented in the attitude of meditation seated on a lotus-blossom, or as about to enter Nirvana, when he is represented as the Sleeping One (O-fo). The best known of the celestial Buddhas is O-mi-t'o-fo (Amitabha) and his name is recited as the beads of the rosary are counted. The Laughing Buddha, (Maitreya), Mi-lê-fo, is a tutelary deity in a class by himself. Among the Bodhisattvas, or lower grade of deities, the most important is Kuan Yin, goddess of Mercy. A Chinese legend makes her the daughter of a King who lived in the seventh century B.C.,

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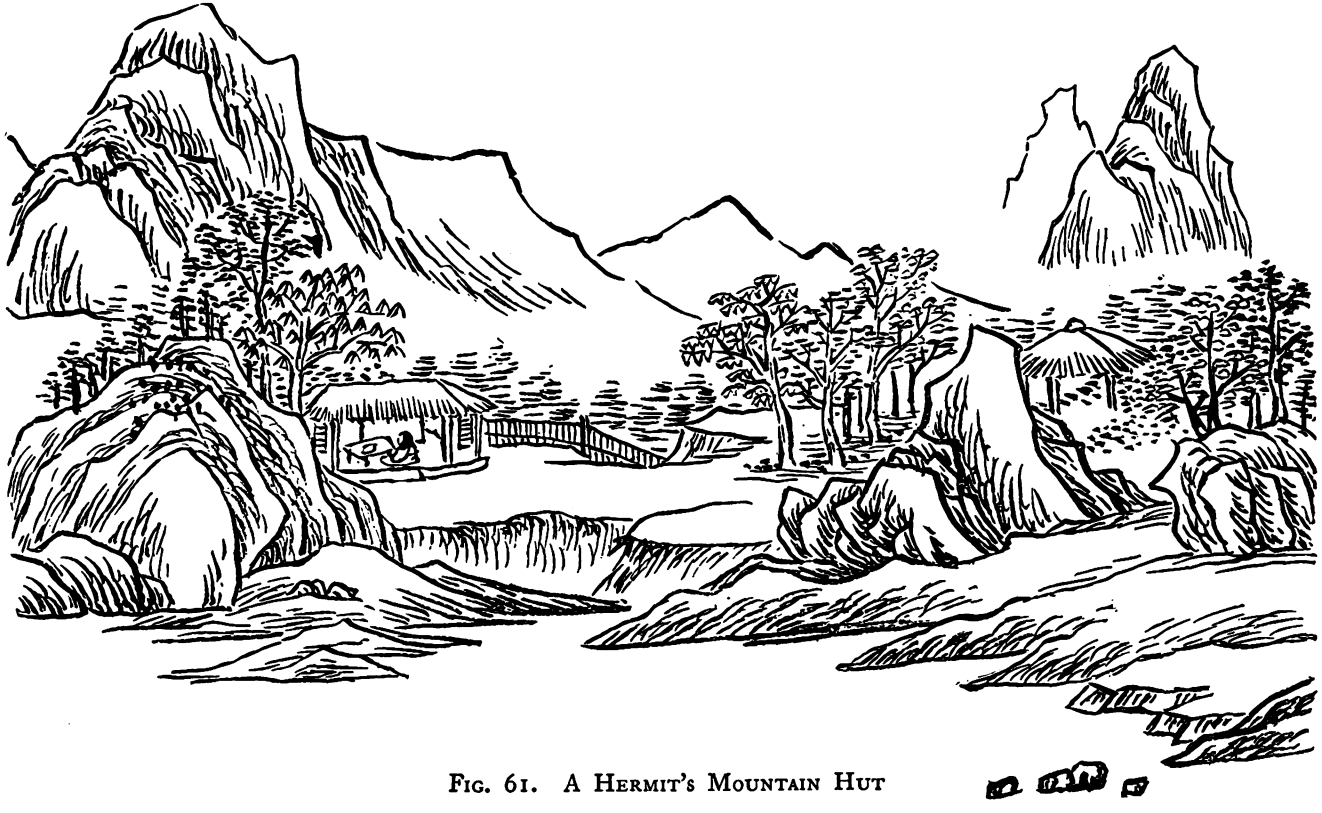

FIG. 61. A HERMIT'S MOUNTAIN HUT

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though before the T'ang dynasty this deity was honoured as a male figure. The development of the worship of Kuan Yin is entirely due to Chinese influence, and she may be rightly considered as a Chinese deity. With her is associated another disciple, Ta-shih-chih, and together they are placed with the historic Buddha as a Trinity of Three Holy Ones (San Shêng). There are three other noted disciples, viz. Wên-shu (Mañjuśrī) who usually rides on an elephant, P'u-hsien who rides on a lion, and Ti-tsang who is the Supreme Ruler of Hell and has under him the twelve Kings of Hell. In addition to the saints (Lo-han) and patriarchs, there are the tutelary gods who are also adapted to Chinese ideas. Of these gods Wei T'o is the best known. He is a warrior, with a sword which is sometimes held in his hands and sometimes rests crosswise on the arms with the hands folded in prayer. Among these tutelary gods is also found Kuan Ti (Kuan Yü) the national god of war. In everything may be seen the moulding influence which the traditional customs and beliefs of China have had upon the form taken by Chinese Buddhism.

One of the best illustrations of the fusion of Buddhistic tradition with indigenous beliefs is the account in the *Shên Hsien T'ung Chien* of the feast given by the Pearl Emperor, Yü Ti, to his assembled officers whom he wished to consult about his proposed visit to the West for the purpose of studying Buddhism. Yü Ti was distinctly an indigenous creation of the Chinese mind, but he is also covered over with a heavy layer of Buddhistic conceptions. The place where he assembled his officers was the Hall of the Thirty-third Heaven. He asked them to help him to formulate plans for a visit to Buddha so that he might receive instruction from him. Their united answer to him contains the gist of the admixture of Buddhist and Taoist thought which is now so common. They said: "Every one, who through seven generations has cultivated the principles of the Immortals, and has not deviated from them, himself be-

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comes an Immortal. You have already attained this high honour, but it will be necessary for you to follow your studies for nine generations before you can go to the West. If you wish to rid yourself completely from the miseries of life and death, you must become incarnate, lead the life of a hermit, and by practising virtue, finally become a Buddha. Otherwise your wish cannot be fulfilled." Yü Ti became a man, passed through several incarnations, and finally was admitted to the Buddhist paradise where he attained his desire of being taught by Buddha. It is a long tale full of interesting details, all of which illustrate the admixture or commingling of Buddhist and Taoist teachings in such a manner that it is difficult to separate them.

The people of China have only adopted such Buddhistic ideas as have been readily assimilated into their previous conceptions. The ancient religion of China, both in its Conservative and Liberal forms, recognized the supervision and control of mundane affairs by higher powers who rewarded the good and punished the wicked. Their worship of ancestors showed their belief in the continued existence of the soul after death. It was therefore easy for the people to accept the Buddhistic teaching about rewards and punishments with its accompaniments of Heavens and Hells, and also the doctrine of reincarnation or transmigration of souls. Buddhism became the means for the delivery of souls from torment. Although this doctrine of the lot of a soul in the future world being influenced by prayers from this world is not in harmony with original Buddhist teachings, it has been fostered among the common people as if it were thoroughly orthodox. It is unquestionably the emphasis which Buddhism has placed upon the relation of man to the future world that has given it its strong hold upon the people. Even with the highly educated and the highly promoted, a change in circumstances or the facing of approaching death attracts them to the teachings of Buddhism and to the observance of its ceremonies. Notwithstanding the adherence

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of the people to many of the external observances of Buddhist temples, it must be remembered that the people of China share very little in the genuine ideas of Buddhistic teaching. They observe such ceremonies as conform to the general principles of their own indigenous religion which is represented on the one hand by the State ceremonies, and on the other by the traditions embodied in Taoism. China cannot be considered as a Buddhistic nation.

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CHAPTER XVI

CRITICISM

THE way of the propagators of myths has not always been smooth. Confucius said: "Although you may respect spiritual beings, hold them at a distance. This is the part of wisdom." This agnostic attitude toward everything supernatural may be considered the ideal of the Confucian teaching; this teaching exhausted man's duty by circumscribing it within the bounds of the known world.

Wang T'ung, 583–616 A.D., of the Sui dynasty, was a strong opponent of all forms of myth. He upheld the teachings of Confucius and criticised Tso-ch'iu Ming, the author of the Commentary on the "Spring and Autumn Annals" (*Tso Chuan*), for introducing so many legends into his book. For the same reason he condemned the "History" (*Shih Chi*) of Ssŭ-ma Ch'ien and its supplement by Pan Ku. He was the first to throw discredit upon the tradition of the Fêng Shan ceremony having been performed by seventy-two ancient Emperors, beginning with Wu Huai and continuing down through the Hsia, Shang and Chow dynasties. Wang T'ung was a man of upright character and unusual intelligence. At nineteen years of age he made a journey to the capital, Ch'ang-an, and laid before the Emperor "Twelve Plans for Peace" (*t'ai-p'ing shih-êr ts'ê*), which were approved but pigeon-holed. He must be given credit for having been one of the first critics of fables, but he was as a voice crying in the wilderness. The T'ang dynasty, which came into power shortly after Wang T'ung's death, gave no heed to his admonitory writings, although it is said that the Emperor T'ai Tsung held them in high respect. They did not,

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however, check or restrain the generations which immediately succeeded him from becoming the most prolific sources of myths in the long history of China.

It was not until the Sung dynasty that the pioneer work of Wang T'ung received due recognition. Ma Tuan-lin, author of *Wên Hsien T'ung K'ao*, praises his work. Ma himself was an able critic. He canvassed the whole field of antiquity with the view of expurgating it of myths and finding precedents for the benevolent autocracy in which he believed. There was a great amount of critical work done during the Sung dynasty, but none was of greater importance than that of Ma Tuan-lin.

The most bitter as well as the most amusing critic of myths, was Han Yü, 768–824 A.D., of the T'ang dynasty. In 819 he was in the position of Censor when the Emperor Hsien Tsung proposed to pay unusual respect to one of the finger-bones of Buddha which had been preserved as a relic in a temple at Fêng Hsiang in Shensi Province. This bone was enclosed in a case which could only be opened once in thirty years, but when opened would bring great prosperity to the Empire. The Emperor ordered it to be escorted to the capital and opened in the palace with elaborate pomp and ceremony. Following the example of the Emperor all classes of the people from highest to lowest offered gifts to the relic. Han Yü, single-handed, opposed the demonstration with a spirit which must be considered heroic when the conditions of the times are remembered. In his remonstrance Han Yü pointed out that Buddhism is only a barbaric superstition which was introduced into China during the Han dynasty. Previous to its arrival the Emperors of antiquity lived to a good old age, the Empire was at peace and its people contented. After this new teaching began, disorder and ruin followed in close succession. The Empire was broken up into small principalities and the dynasties were of short duration. The more devoted the rulers were to Buddhistic teaching, the more disaster they brought upon themselves and the coun-

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try. When the first Emperor of the T'ang dynasty came to the throne it was his original intention to prohibit Buddhism, but he was dissuaded by his Ministers from carrying it into effect. "When you, the present Emperor, came to the throne I had great expectations that you would carry out this proposal of your illustrious ancestor, and was pleased when you issued proclamations prohibiting the people from becoming Buddhist or Taoist priests. Only a few years have passed since you took this commendable action and now you are found reversing entirely your former opinions. You have employed a host of priests to escort a bone of Buddha to the capital. You must know that this procedure cannot bring blessings upon yourself; you must have ordered it in the hope that it would lead the people to expect a prosperous year, or perhaps even for the purpose of amusing them. The populace, however, misunderstands your object and interprets what you have done as a sincere reverence for Buddha. Soon you will see them observing all the objectionable rites of this false religion to the neglect of their proper duties to the State. It is ridiculous to pay such honour to the bone of any dead person. In ancient times when funeral rites were conducted with propriety it was not allowable to touch a corpse, but now you have encouraged your Ministers to handle such a loathsome object as the bone of a dead person. You must renounce what you have done, throw the disgusting bone into a river or burn it so as to warn the people against such infamous delusions."

These were the caustic words of Han Yü. Some of the Ministers recommended that he should be condemned to death for such unjustifiable railing against his Sovereign; but a saner view was taken by the Emperor himself, who appointed him to the distant post of Prefect of Ch'ao-chou in Canton Province. Han Yü later described this place in a memorial as the "abode of typhoons and crocodiles where the air is malarial and poisonous." Here he remained during the tragic years when the Em-

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peror came under the influence of the hated eunuch, Ch'êng Ts'ui, and spent most of his time searching for the elixir of life. It is generally believed that the Emperor was poisoned by one of these potions, as was also his son and successor, Mu Tsung. The calamities against which Han Yü had warned the Emperor actually came to pass during the life-time of this faithful and fearless Minister.

Han Yü had a delightful sense of humour along with his keen discrimination. He issued a solemn proclamation against crocodiles in the name of the Imperial power of which he was the local representative. This was a sly thrust at the over-weening complaisance of officials with the whims of the Emperor. The proclamation was issued in 820 A.D. and was addressed to the crocodiles. He reminded them of the lenience with which he had treated them since he had assumed the office of Prefect. This was in contrast even to what had been done by ancient kings who had not hesitated to drive out all snakes, reptiles and poisonous creatures. " It is only because this place is so far from the capital seat of Imperial power that you, crocodiles, dare to lurk round in the waters of the coast where you plunder food and propagate your young. However, I am the duly appointed representative of the all-powerful Emperor and am charged with the duty of caring for his people who live in this district. In my high position of responsibility I shall not allow myself to be terrorized by you, crocodiles. If you have any intelligence you will listen to my words. Within three days you are commanded to betake yourselves to the Great Ocean where you will find myriads of fish upon which you can feed. If you cannot reach a desirable place in three days I will extend the time to five or even seven days, but beyond that period I will not suffer your presence in these waters. If you disobey my commands I will select the most expert of my officers and men and we shall come with bows and poisoned arrows with which we shall utterly exterminate your whole race."

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It is characteristic of the credulity of the age in which Han Yü lived that none of his contemporaries allowed themselves to comment upon this proclamation except in terms which took it seriously. One of them gravely remarks that following the issuing of these orders a violent storm raged for several days during which the crocodiles were all driven away. There could be no better evidence than this of the grip of occult influences in which the people of the T'ang dynasty were held.

A similar performance to that of Han Yü with the crocodiles was enacted by Hu Yin of the Sung dynasty, who died 1151 A.D. It occurred in this same city of Ch'ao-chou. The "Sung Dynasty History" (*Sung Shih*) records that when Hu Yin was Prefect of Ch'ao-chou he heard of the mysterious powers of a large serpent which, the priests claimed, had power to control the prosperity of the district. Former incumbents of the office of Prefect had been accustomed to pay high respect to this serpent, but Hu Yin decided to expose the fallacious pretensions which were claimed for it by the priests. He ordered it to be brought to his official residence and then said to it: "If you are a spirit, change yourself into one within three days, or at the end of that time I will kill you." There was no transformation, and Hu Yin carried out his threat, destroyed the serpent and punished the deceitful priests.

Many other similar examples of opposition might be quoted, but they would be lost in the multitude of corroborations of miraculous interventions with which Chinese books are crowded. As in every country, the intelligent objectors to superstitious beliefs formed a small minority in the age in which they lived. It is only by succeeding generations that the value of their courageous criticism has been recognized. With the growth of modern scientific knowledge there will be a gradual loosening of the hold which these beliefs have upon the people, and the work of the pioneer critics will be increasingly appreciated.

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